

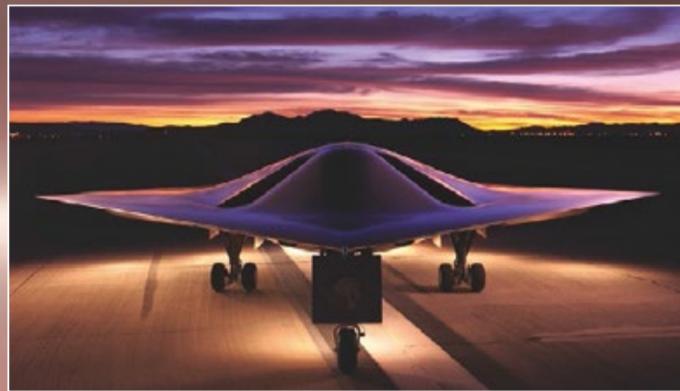
Amateur Photographer

Sony Alpha 7 II

Find out why Sony's latest full-frame CSC is its best yet



Passionate about photography since 1884



Joe McNally
World-renowned photographer
shares his off-camera flash tips

APOY 2014

Your best **architecture photos**

PLUS we reveal the overall winner of
Amateur Photographer of the Year

Britain's top landscape photographer

Reigning LPOTY winner Mark Littlejohn
talks us through his stunning portfolio

PLUS Olympus 40-150mm f/2.8 • Professor Bob Newman on speed boosters

D750

24.3
MEGAPIXEL

51
FOCUS
POINTS

TIILT SCREEN

BUILT-IN WIFI



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When I first started photography, I would avoid using a flashgun like the plague. The only help available when using it was a confusing array of different-coloured lines and numbers on the rear of the flash.

Thankfully, advancements in technology, and the help of excellent articles and guides, have made flash easier to use. Intelligent TTL metering, combined with the more advanced

7days

A week in photography

metering in our cameras, means that it is relatively easy to get a nicely exposed image, whether you are pointing the flash directly or bouncing it off a ceiling or wall.

One area that is still daunting for many is wireless flash control. However, the basics are quite straightforward and the potential to produce better images is fantastic. Read Phil Hall's guide to off-camera flash on page 14 and see how Joe McNally puts it to use on page 10.

Richard Sibley, deputy editor

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ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK



On the Train by Matthew Dartford

Canon EOS 5D Mark III, 24mm, 1/1600sec at f/2, ISO 100

We all take pictures of our loved ones, but sometimes it's nice to capture something more than a quick snapshot. This image of a young boy gazing out of a train window from Matthew Dartford was uploaded to the AP Flickr page.

'The shot is of my son Thomas during a day trip out on the Bure Valley Railway in Norfolk,' says Matthew. 'At this particular

time, Tom was looking out of the window and lost in thought while watching some horses grazing in a field.

'Shooting with quite a wide aperture gave the image a dreamy feel, which I think lends itself quite well to the subject. It also allows the background to blur away, keeping both Tom's face and his reflection nice and sharp and well defined.'



Win!

Each week we will choose our favourite picture posted on the AP Facebook and Flickr communities and the AP forum. The winner will receive a year's digital subscription to AP worth £79.99.

Send us your pictures

If you'd like to see your work published in *Amateur Photographer*, here's how to send us your images:

Email Email a selection of low-res images (up to 5MB of attachments in total) to appicturedesk@timeinc.com.

CD/DVD Send us a disc of high-resolution JPEG, TIFF or PSD images (at least 2480 pixels along its longest length), with a contact sheet, to the address on page 19.

Via our online communities Post your pictures into our Flickr group, Facebook page or the gallery on our website. See details above.

Transparencies/prints Well-packed prints or slides (without glass mounts) should be sent by Special Delivery, with a return SAE, to the address on page 19.

NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Chris Cheesman

Compact camera trio

Nikon has launched three sub-£100 compacts. Due in February is the £99.99 Coolpix S3700 (pictured), with 20 million pixels and 8x optical zoom, plus built-in Wi-Fi and NFC. Due now is the 16-million-pixel, 5x optical zoom Coolpix L31 (£79.99) and the 20-million-pixel Coolpix S2900, also with a 5x zoom, which is on sale only at Argos (£99.99).



GoPro share crash

GoPro shares tumbled after technology giant Apple was granted a patent for a wearable action camera. The *Financial Times* reported that GoPro shares fell by 12% on 13 January. The patent describes a digital camera system that includes a wireless connection and the capacity to be operated remotely.

Park run

Park Cameras staff will take turns on a treadmill in a bid to run the distance between the retailer's West Sussex and London stores on 29 January. A team of 13 staff will take part in the event, in front of customers and colleagues at the Burgess Hill shop. They aim to complete the 45.7-mile task in eight hours, in aid of St Peter and St James' Hospice. To support the challenge, visit www.parkcameras.com/run.



The current Kodak AZ651

Kodak plan

A Kodak-branded camera featuring a 65x optical zoom is due to debut later this year. The AZ652 is expected to cost around \$380 and is set to include a 3in articulating screen, full HD video and built-in Wi-Fi. It is expected to go on sale before the end of September.

'All-weathers' compact

Fujifilm is set to launch a new compact, the 16.4-million-pixel FinePix XP80, that is designed to be waterproof, shockproof, freeze-proof and dustproof. It boasts an LCD with an 'anti-reflection' coating, plus wireless connection, enabling remote shooting. Its 5x lens is equivalent to 28mm at the wide end. The XP80 is due in March, priced £199.99.



WEEKEND PROJECT

Winter details

While trees and bushes are looking perhaps their worst at this time of year, with most devoid of any foliage to cover their branches, there is still plenty of photographic potential to be had if you look a little closer with your camera.

Plants such as cow parsley, which have been left to whither in these cold and dark months, and are devoid of leaves, seeds and flowers, take on a different kind of beauty that is a far cry from the rich colours that are on show in spring and summer.

You may have to work a little harder to get a successful shot, but the rewards will be worth it. Also, you won't have to travel far, either, as there are bound to be plenty of opportunities right on your doorstep.

1 Riverbanks are great places to wander along for potential subject matter. Try shooting with the river behind a plant to deliver a nice clean background that will isolate your subject.

2 Macro lenses can be handy in these situations, but are not essential. An affordable standard prime lens can focus relatively close, while the wide apertures available will throw the background out nicely.

BIG picture

Sony announces six new Imaging Ambassadors

As we reported in News last week, Sony has announced six new Imaging Ambassadors, with each specialising in a particular genre. The ambassadors are: portrait photographer and film-maker Gavin Evans; landscape photographer Joe Cornish; social documentary photographer Michael Wayne Plant; fashion and sport photographer Nick Webster; Dominic Fraser, a photographer and videographer specialising in automobiles; and travel/wildlife photographer Andrew Scriven. Here we take look at an image by Gavin Evans, a photographer we interviewed in AP 14 June 2014. This image comes from his nocturnal project *Nightscapes*, a series of images that found the photographer exploring the streets of India at night.

Words & numbers

It's not enough to have talent, you also have to be Hungarian
Robert Capa

Hungarian photojournalist
1913-1954

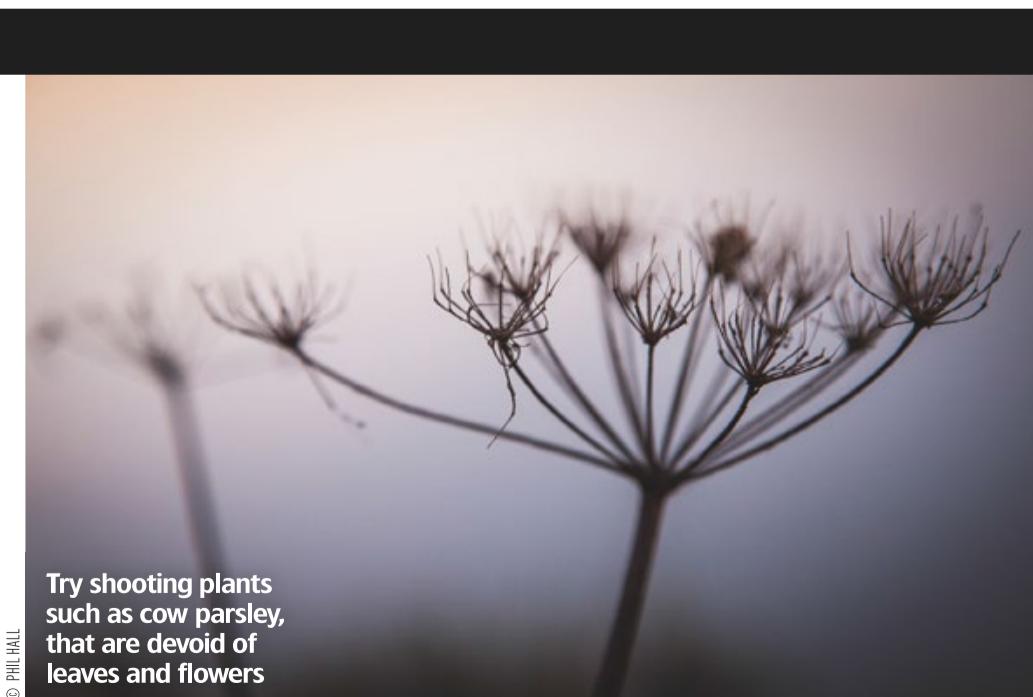
1.98 million
Total fixed-lens camera unit sales for the UK in 2014, a fall of 30%

SOURCE: FUTURE RESOURCE



3 With the sun naturally low at this time of year, pleasing silhouettes are possible when shooting into the sun. In some instances, you may need to shoot from a lower position looking upwards to achieve a clean background.

4 Aim to shoot on a calm, still day, especially if you're working with relatively low shutter speeds, as wind will introduce unwanted movement that will see sharpness suffer.



Try shooting plants such as cow parsley, that are devoid of leaves and flowers

© PHIL HALL



Fears street shots of children will face ban

THE ROYAL Photographic Society (RPS) has joined the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) in condemning a campaign they fear will lead to a draconian ban on publishing photographs of children without parental consent.

The organisations warn that any change in the law would pose a serious threat to street photographers and press freedom.

The furore follows a campaign by musician Paul Weller and his wife Hannah, who won a High Court battle against the *Daily Mail* after its website published unpixelated photos of the Wellers' children captured by a freelance photographer at a shopping centre in Los Angeles, USA, in October 2012.

The Wellers won a reported £10,000 in damages.

Their campaign has reached the House of Lords, where peers have been urged to change the law to protect children's privacy.

An online petition, set up by Protect: The Campaign for Children's Privacy, has gained

more than 400 signatures.

However, the move quickly led to fears for photographers' rights.

'Dangerous' proposal

On its Facebook page, the RPS said: 'The Society would view this with significant concern if the government decides to legislate.'

RPS director general Michael Pritchard told AP: 'There is enough existing legislation to deal with harassment without the need for such a blanket law...'

Pritchard questioned how 'publication' would be defined and cautioned that 'there are far wider implications [for] general amateur and professional photography that currently would not need a model release [form] signing...'

'From an amateur's perspective, would that definition of "publication" include showing in a photo competition (online/in a gallery)?'

The NUJ photographers' council warned: 'The proposal is simplistic, dangerous, wrong in principle, unworkable and not

the answer to the problems [the campaigners] raise.'

'Banning photographs of children – all children – without prior parental consent would have a chilling effect on a free press.' The NUJ concedes that campaigners propose exceptions for crowd shots and photos published in the public interest.

One council member told AP: 'If this carries on as discussed, it will kill both street photography and social media.'

Protect says photos published online may be used inappropriately, by criminals adapting them to create images of child abuse, for example. They add that exposing children's identity can also make them 'targets for kidnap or other crime by individuals who may want to harm the parents'.

The campaigners add: 'The ask is simple: in a photograph where a child is identified, if there is no consent and publication is not in the public interest, publishers must pixelate the faces of minors to respect their privacy.'



Fujifilm X-A2 due in March

FUJIFILM has unveiled the X-A2 compact system camera boasting a 175° tilting LCD screen.

Rotation of the X-A2's screen triggers the operation of the new eye-detection AF (designed to automatically focus on a subject's eyes), in a bid to make it easier for users to shoot self-portraits.

The 3in display has a resolution of 920,000 dots.

The X-A2 carries a 16.3-million-pixel, APS-C-sized imaging sensor and EXR Processor II engine, plus an ISO that extends to 25,600.

Features also include Fuji's Classic Chrome film-simulation mode, which aims to produce deeper colours and richer tones.

The X-A2 is due out in March, priced £449.99 with a 16-50mm lens



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Nikon is offering free inspection and repair

Nikon confirms D750 flare glitch

Nikon has urged D750 users to return their cameras for free inspection and repair if they have 'unnaturally shaped flare' appearing in their photographs.

However, the firm insists that its request for customers to return their cameras does not represent a product recall.

Earlier this month, US photography website Petapixel suggested that a 'quiet recall is underway', adding that the D750 is 'disappearing from stores' shelves'.

A Nikon spokesperson told AP: 'We are not recalling the Nikon D750.'

'Some customers have experienced the issue and to ensure good customer satisfaction we have requested that those affected return the product to Nikon for inspection and fix.'

'We will inspect and repair light-shielding components, and adjust the AF sensor position at no cost to users.'

Nikon confirmed that 'cameras stocked in retail' will also be inspected.

'Nikon is working with

retailers to replenish stock with cameras that have been checked for the flaring issue.'

'[Earlier] in January, Nikon also announced that customers affected by the issue could return their camera to Nikon for service, free of charge.'

Nikon added: 'With regards to how customers contact Nikon about this matter, we plan to initiate this service at the end of January. We will announce further details, including instructions for requesting servicing, as they are determined.'

First outing for Sony lens prototypes

Sony has showcased the prototypes of its latest FE macro, wideangle, travel zoom and adapter lenses for its full-frame Alpha 7-series cameras.

AP witnessed five new FE-mount lenses inside a display case at CES in Las Vegas, USA, earlier this month.

The prototypes included a Sony FE 28mm f/2. Photographers who want to go even wider will also have the choice of a wideangle or fisheye adapter.

We believe that the adapter will be compatible with the 28mm f/2 lens.

Also showcased were the Sony FE 90mm f/2.8 G OSS, a Zeiss Distagon



The full-frame E-mount lenses at CES

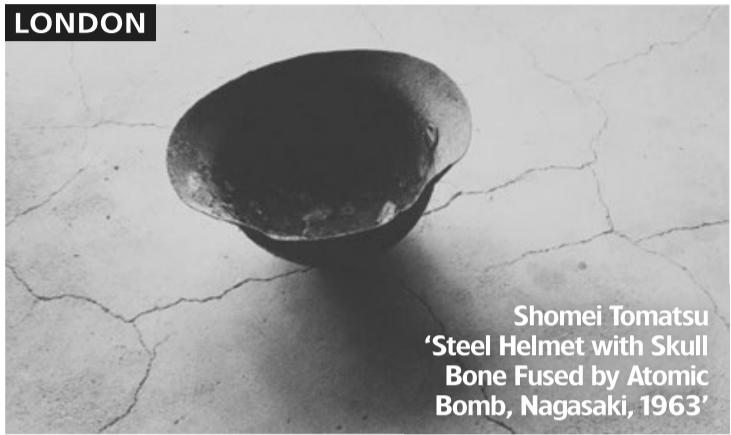
T* FE 35mm f/1.4 ZA, FE 35mm f/2.8 and a 24-240mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS travel zoom.

For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Get up & go

The most interesting things to see, to do and to shoot this week. By Jon Stapley

LONDON



Shomei Tomatsu
'Steel Helmet with Skull Bone Fused by Atomic Bomb, Nagasaki, 1963'

Conflict, Time, Photography

The Tate's startlingly good exhibition on the passage of time as it relates to worldwide conflict is still running for another month. Images are ordered by how long after the event they are taken, including horrific world-changing events such as the bombings of Nagasaki and Dresden. Essential.

Until 15 March, www.tate.org.uk

BERKSHIRE



Landscapes of Innocence and Experience

The Verey Gallery is exhibiting a selection of works from Simon Roberts, who specialises in large-format images that speak about our relationship to the landscape in the UK.

28 January-24 April, simoncroberts.com/news/events/exhibitions

EVERYWHERE



Enter Astronomy Photographer of the Year

The renowned astrophotography competition returns with a host of new categories. One special prize is reserved for newcomers to the discipline, so it's a great way to get started shooting the stars!

Until 16 April
www.rmg.co.uk/astrophoto



EVERYWHERE

Snowdrop Festival

As the snowdrops open, VisitScotland and Scotland's Gardens have put together a great programme of snowdrop gardens all around the country. A perfect excuse to get some good floral shots.

31 January-15 March, www.scotlands-gardens.org, www.visitscotland.com

GDT European Wildlife Photographer of the Year

This German-run competition is open to photographers all across Europe, so you've got until March to hunt down a great wildlife shot. Bonus for young shutterbugs – this year the society has introduced categories for children and teenagers.

Until 1 March, www.gdtfoto.de



© RÉMI MASSON

SCOTLAND



Viewpoint Kevin Meredith

Capturing a successful shot of a popular event can be fraught with difficulties. Is it a case of too many photographers spoiling the shot?

This has probably happened to you: something interesting is developing and you're trying to document it, but the biggest challenge is not getting another photographer in your shot. There are many events – such as the Santa Run or the Mermaid Walk – where it's almost impossible not to get a good picture. The trouble is, as an event's popularity increases, so does the number of photographers in attendance. And photographers really can ruin photography.

Fortunately, as a professional photographer, I can obtain access to events that would otherwise be difficult to shoot. It's rather like having a licence to be a nosy parker. When a client hires a photographer, they tend to be really helpful and go the extra mile in order to get the pictures they want. I've never really done press work, and have only been in a scrum of photographers a few times. I have to say, I don't like it. It's not that much different to people wrestling over flat-screen TVs on Black Friday. It can be ridiculous. I'm sure you've all seen footage of a lone hooded man smashing a window in a riot, surrounded not by fellow rioters but by photographers and cameramen.

This problem isn't confined to photography, as it's not so much a case of 'too many photographers spoil the shot' as 'too many people spoil an event'. Social

'As an event's popularity increases, so does the number of photographers'

networking has the power to kill an event. When images of something exciting or different appear online and go viral, more people learn about it, and the next one can end up oversubscribed. Brighton's 2014 zombie walk, Beach of the Dead, is just one example, cancelled because the cost of stewarding and medical cover made it impossible to stage. Beach of the Dead started in 2007 with some 40 participants. Within two years, there was pretty much one photographer for every zombie, and four years later it was killed off (hopefully to rise from the dead once more).

I tend to steer clear of photographing popular events, preferring to enjoy them as a spectator and then shooting a subject that's more off the beaten track. Getting a good picture is nearly always about being in the right place at the right time. Very often, I produce my best work when most people are still in bed. It's very rare to encounter a photo scrum at 7am.

Kevin Meredith is an obsessive documentary photographer and author of several instructional books. He regularly runs workshops in Brighton and sometimes further afield

The more popular an event, the more people turn up to take photographs



© KEVIN MEREDITH

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 19 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

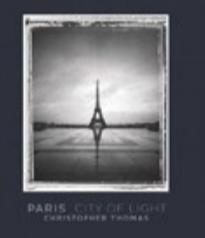
New Books

The latest and best books from the world of photography. By Oliver Atwell



Paris: City of Light

by Christopher Thomas, Prestel, £40, hardback, 80 pages, ISBN 978-3-7791-3496-0



IT'S RARE to see such a bustling cosmopolitan city as Paris devoid of human presence. However, this is exactly what Christopher Thomas has achieved through his use of large-format photography, long exposures and night-time shooting. Looking through the images is not unlike experiencing a dream where you explore a long-forgotten city. With no people to act as a point of reference, the landscapes and buildings take on a magical quality. Each image was shot using the last of Thomas's Type 55 Polaroid film. As a result, we have a series of hauntingly beautiful images framed by ragged and imperfect edges. The photographs are printed on heavy paper and are bound within a linen cover – a design device that in a very physical way further emphasises the majestic nature of the project. ★★★★

Red Hot 100

by Thomas Knights, Bruno Gmünd Verlag, £50, hardback, 128 pages, ISBN 978-3-86787-767-1



'GUYS with red hair don't have the positive role models that girls do in our culture,' says photographer Thomas Knights. 'A male with red hair is not seen as aspirational, culturally speaking, with very few leading men, heroes, action stars or heart-throbs played by men with red hair in Hollywood or on our TV screens.' It's with this in mind that Knights set out to elevate red-haired males from the butt of cultural humour to the status of sex symbol. Through the lens of Knights' camera, these guys become confident, heroic and occupy something bordering on alpha male status. At its heart, *Red Hot 100* is a genuinely sweet-natured project, one that benefits greatly from Knights' assured and technically excellent handling of portraiture. If you have a red-haired male in your life who's feeling blue, this could be the pick-me-up they need. ★★★★

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Joe McNally

Joe McNally is an internationally acclaimed photographer whose career has spanned 30 years. He has been a contract photographer for *Sports Illustrated*, a staff photographer at *Life*, and is currently an ongoing 23-year contributor to *National Geographic*, shooting numerous cover stories for those publications. joemcnally.com

Master of light

Famous for stunning flashlit images, **Joe McNally** is at the top of his game. **Phil Hall** finds out more

Shooting for the likes of *National Geographic* and *Sports Illustrated* for more than 30 years, as well as commercial clients such as Nikon and FedEx, Joe McNally has been voted one of the most influential photographers of the past decade. To many he's known as a wizard of flash photography, with his books and workshops in high demand.

Late last year, AP hosted one of Joe's workshops at our offices in conjunction with the Nikon School. Shortly before taking to the stage, we sat down for a revealing chat.

While Joe points out that he wasn't the first person to get involved with flashguns, he did start using them early on in his career, shooting with Nikon's first generation of TTL-type Speedlight flashes in the late 1980s.

'They were crude compared to what we have now, but it was a start. I was interested in the flash talking to the camera and the ability to be adaptable, and to react to exposure changes,' Joe recalls.

'I like to surrender myself to the uncertainty of TTL because there are advantages I can get back,' he says. 'I can make my first frame and often



it'll be spot on. I like the idea of the technology – sometimes I struggle with it just like anybody, but I've worked with it a long time and feel like I'm starting to get a handle on it.'

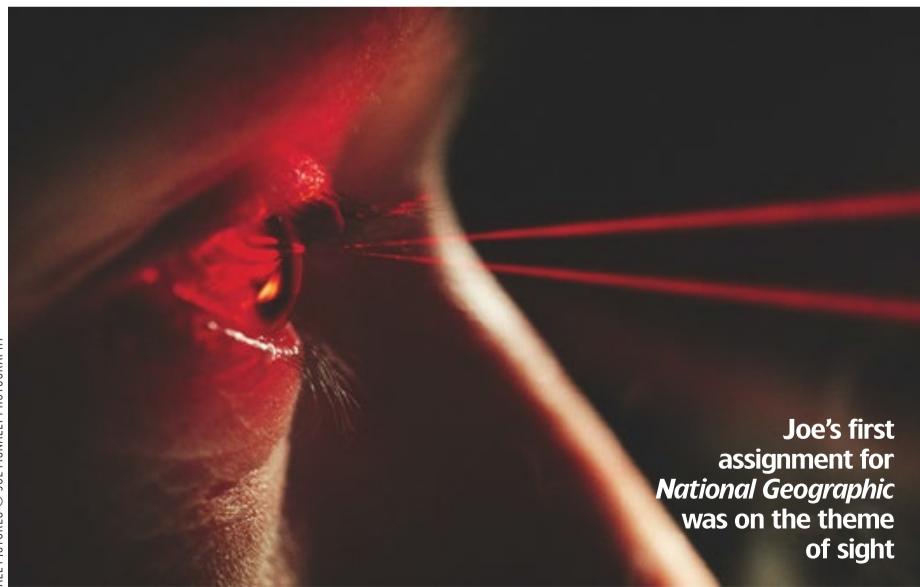
Style and approach

Joe shoots a broad range of topics and doesn't pigeonhole himself into one discipline, seeing himself as a generalist. This means the amount of preparation that goes into a shoot can vary wildly. 'If you have a big production shoot, there have been hundreds of hours of emails and a couple of months of preparation on the part of the producer to get all of the permissions, permits, insurance, talent, hair and

make-up together. So when you get in front of the camera, there's been a ton of work done already,' says Joe.

His editorial shoots can be much more fluid. There's still the usual phone calling and other arrangements to make, but when Joe gets on location, 'You're flying by the seat of your pants,' as he puts it. 'You're looking and finding what will work about the location and you're meeting the people for the first time. I kind of work both ends of the block and I enjoy it all.'

The wide range of work that Joe covers means there's no particular lighting set-up that he relies on. Instead, he adapts his style and approach to the



Joe's first assignment for *National Geographic* was on the theme of sight



The X-47 Pegasus unmanned combat aerial vehicle was shot as part of a body of work on the future of flight for *National Geographic*

nature of the job he's doing. 'I've been assigned to things that are just "run and gun" – one flashgun off the camera, sometimes one flashgun on the camera; I'm not a purist about it,' reveals Joe.

This approach was perfectly illustrated on a recent job he completed for *Life*, where he shot a series of portraits outside on location with a single flashgun, or sometimes a bigger light if needed. On the other hand, he's been asked by editorial clients to light large things, such as observatories for *National Geographic*. As Joe puts it, 'It's crazy. With these buildings sitting on the tops of mountains, I've had to ship upwards of 50 cases of kit' 

This image was shot for the Photo Plus Expo last year, held over Halloween



to the locations before taking two weeks to light the buildings.'

Gear

Having shot with Nikon film kit throughout his long career, it was the arrival of the 5.3-million-pixel D1X in 2001 that saw Joe first embrace digital. 'It was the first camera I saw on the market that could approximate the quality of Kodachrome, a film that I'd shot thousands of rolls with during years at *National Geographic*,' he says.

It was also with the D1X that Joe shot the first all-digital cover story in the history of *National Geographic* in 2003.

Joe feels that digital has enlarged our imagination and our technical ability, and there are a couple of sporting pictures from early in his career that he wishes he'd captured with his current kit. One specific example is of baseball player 'Sweet' Lou Piniella arguing with an umpire, which he shot using Kodak Tri-X rated at ISO 1600 and developed underneath the stadium.

Joe recalls that 'the editors would edit the film wet and then throw it into an enlarger before knocking off a print because it was all about getting it out there fast down the wire. So I have this nice photograph and it's the only really good sports picture I've shot in my life. It's grainy as well, but with the ISOs we have now? I wish I'd had digital then.'

As a Nikon Ambassador, Joe can often be seen wielding D4S or D810 cameras on a shoot, but he's also a big fan of the D750 thanks to the combination of its impressive files in a light and fast body. His lens choice may surprise some, though. 'It's not fancy, but it has to be the 24-70mm

f/2.8,' he says. 'I'm a feature photographer, I'm in a working space with you and that focal length is right in the sweet-spot of where I need to be. I take it on every job.'

On to the subject of light modifiers, Joe tends to prefer the quality of light of a softbox over umbrellas, with a 1 x 3ft striplight softbox design currently being used. As Joe explains, 'It's a versatile light. Pitch it horizontally, make a narrow skinny beam out of it if you want to, use it as a sidelight, a profile light. I find that shape of softbox to be among my favourite light-shaping tools.'

Favourite shoot

Looking back over his career, Joe thinks that perhaps his most complete shoot is his first cover story for *National Geographic*. 'It was about the sense of sight and I was awarded a contract to shoot the job for 26 weeks out in the field,' remembers Joe. 'If you can imagine being a photographer and being told you have a year of funding to go look at this amazing organ that you depend on as a photographer, to take it apart, look at it and explore it. It was like being given a grant just to be a photographer.'

Finally, what makes a good flashlit image? Joe says it should be one that looks like it hasn't been lit by flash. Joe works hard to make it appear he's not there and hasn't done a lot of work. 'You never want the viewer's first impression to be, "Wow! This must have been a lot of work to light". That can come later,' he says. 'You want the first impression to be a visceral and involving experience. Often when I'm lighting and working very hard at it, what I'm working at doing is making sure you don't notice the lighting.'

AP



In the back seat of a Blue Angels display team aircraft

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School



JOE'S TOP 5 TIPS FOR USING FLASH

1 Read your manual

Joe says: 'If I were a certain kind of photographer, my first and only tip would be: "Don't do it, man!" Seriously, though, first read your manual, because if you're not confident with your tools, your pictures will not be confident.'

'I see a lot of people head out into the field – and I'm guilty of this as well – with very fancy automated digital kit that can pretty much cook breakfast in addition to shooting lovely images.'

You set it to program and raise it to your eye; the camera is focusing and exposing well and the temptation is to think there's no learning curve here at all. Well, there is.'

2 Experiment

'Experiment before you go into the field,' says Joe. 'Take your long-suffering spouse or your kids or even your dog and try to experiment with light. The "big three" things about light that you

have to remember are quality, colour and direction, so experiment with all three of these. Try hard light, soft light and gels. What does the light look like when it's coming from behind your subject, or from the side? Try it out and see what happens.'

3 Test your kit

'Don't go out with gear you've just bought, especially if you have a paid job to do,' adds Joe. 'Do some testing first before you shoot.'

4 Get some education

Joe says: 'Learn from an expert. Workshops in lighting abound, but pick one that suits you. Look at a photographer's work and if you like their images, see if they run workshops.'

5 Break the rules

'Finally,' adds Joe, 'I think I would say tear up the rulebook. Light with feeling, light with instinct and light with emotion.'

Trigger happy

Phil Hall shows you how to use your flashgun for studio-style pics on location

The ability to unshackle your flashgun from your camera's hotshoe and fire it remotely from another position can transform a shot, resulting in an image with a more sculptured and striking lighting effect compared to simply directing the flash face-on to your subject.

There are a couple of ways to trigger a flashgun remotely, but the method that requires the least outlay to get started is infrared. This approach uses your camera's built-in flash to trigger the compatible flashgun, with the latter's output controlled via the camera's

dedicated interface, so you don't have to change the settings on the flashgun itself. With most camera systems now offering some form of off-camera wireless flash control, it's never been easier to have a go.

Most systems are clever enough to offer sophisticated TTL control, although switching to manual output will provide you with greater control and perhaps more consistent results. Should you be using multiple flashguns, you can divide your output into three groups (A, B and C). This will allow you to control the output of the flashguns independently,

so on a two-light set-up the flash lighting the subject can be set to Group A, while the second flash adding some rim lighting can be set to Group B because it will require less power. If you're worried about the built-in flash having an effect on your image as well, you can set this so it will only trigger the flashgun and not emit light onto your subject.

You can always use multiple flashguns and gels to manipulate the light, but a simple set-up of a sole flashgun and a light modifier such as a softbox can enable you to achieve dramatic lighting effects. Turn over to see how to get started.



Right: The Cactus V6 allows wireless control over multiple brands of flash at the same time

Below: PocketWizard's Plus III Transceiver set is a popular choice



Radio triggers

WHILE infrared is a good route into off-camera flash, radio triggers offer a greater range. Also, line of sight is no longer an issue, meaning flashguns can be positioned out of view of your camera for some interesting set-ups.

You'll need a transmitter that attaches to your camera's PC sync socket and/or hotshoe, and a receiver that connects to the flashgun via the hotshoe and/or PC sync socket. Some systems are sold as transceiver sets, such as PocketWizard's Plus III (£229) or the Cactus V6 (£98 for two), where both units can act as either a transmitter or receiver for added flexibility and control.





A single flashgun with a softbox positioned off-camera to the left has resulted in much more flattering light

Technique OFF-CAMERA FLASH

KIT LIST



Light stand

Unless you've got a willing assistant, a light stand is incredibly handy for positioning your light. Manfrotto's 5001B Nano Stand (around £45) is a good option.

Diffusion

To soften the light, a softbox or umbrella is a great starting point. The Lastolite Ezybox range (from £55) is a great choice and come in various sizes.



Head

You'll need something to connect your flash to your light stand. A good starting point is Lastolite's Tilthead with hotshoe attachment (£18).



Use multiple flashes for more complex lighting

SETTING UP OFF-CAMERA FLASH



1 Diffusion

Set up your light – here I'm going to use one light off to the left and facing at 45° to our model, and attaching a mini softbox to the flashgun will enable me to diffuse the light. Once in place, set the flashgun to its remote mode.

2 Exposure

Put the camera into manual exposure mode as this will give the most control. Meter the scene (without firing the flash). In this case I have an exposure of 1/250sec (our camera's max flash sync speed) at f/2.8, with ISO 400 as a starting point.

3 Adjustments

Darken the shot so that when you introduce the flash, your subject is isolated nicely. By dropping my ISO down to 100 and increasing the aperture to f/4, I'll underexpose the scene by 3 stops and darken the scene just enough.



4 Flash control

Bring in the flash. Pop the flash up on the camera. In the menu select Custom Menu Setting, then Flash ctrl for built-in flash and then Commander mode. Here you can control both the output of the on-board flash and the remote flashgun.

5 Flash set-up

By setting the Built-in flash option as --, the built-in flash will only trigger the remote flashgun and will not affect the exposure. For Group A (check your flash is set to Group A), set the Mode to M and a starting Comp. of 1/4 before hitting OK.

6 Shoot

Making sure there's a clear line of sight between you and your flash, fire the shutter and the flash should be triggered. Review your shot and, if your subject is too light or too dark, go back into the Commander mode and toggle the Comp. to suit.

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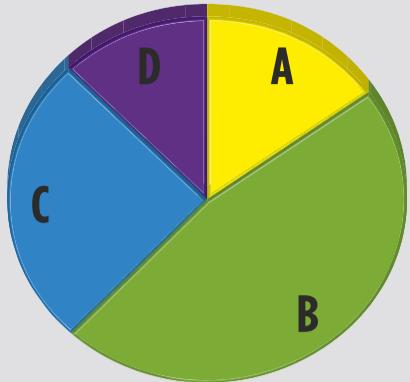
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In AP 10 January, we asked...

Do you still shop at a specialist local photo retailer?

You answered...

A Yes, I buy all my purchases from there	15%
B Yes, some of them, but I also shop elsewhere	47%
C No, I don't have a specialist local photo retailer near me	26%
D No, there are better deals online or from the multiples	12%

What you said

'A few weeks ago I would have answered differently, but our local dealer closed down'

'I have an excellent local retailer who is usually happy to price-match with major online dealers'

'I do not have a local camera shop. I have bought nothing in one for the past ten years. I now find on-foot shopping lacks choice, range and competitiveness'

'I try, but there are occasions when I buy online – usually for cheap accessories and batteries'

'The nearest proper shop to me is 25 miles away and the only place I buy gear! I never shop online'

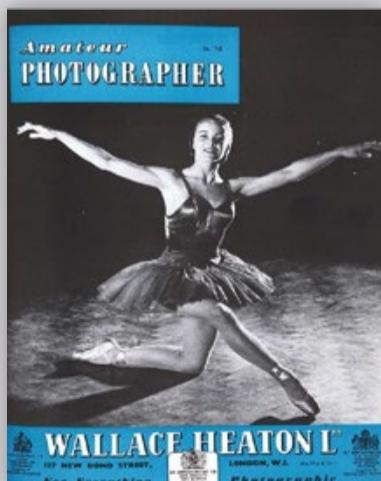
Join the debate on the AP forum

This week we ask

Have you used wireless flash control?

Vote online www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Guess the date



Win! Every week we post an old AP cover on our Facebook page and all you have to do is guess the issue date (day/month/year). The person who is closest to the exact date wins a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99. To guess the date of this cover (above), head over to www.facebook.com/Amateur.photographer.magazine. Forum members can also enter via the Forum.

The 10 January issue's cover was from 20 March 1916. The winner is Stephen Prior from our Facebook page, who was closest with his guess of 18 April 1916.

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Lens-hood confusion

For many years, I was a troubleshooter for photographers who were not getting the sharpness and contrast they would expect out of pro-spec lenses. They would show me pictures that looked slightly blurred and had soft contrast in the dark areas of the image. I would offer to take some pictures myself to locate the problem.

To start, I would remove the lens cap and fit the lens hood in the correct position. The customer would then say: 'I didn't know that came off!' I would ask them what they were referring to and they would reply, 'The plastic bit on the end!' At that point, the lens test was over. It was obvious the customer was not aware that the plastic bit on the end was a lens hood, which plays a big part in shading the lens from flare and inconsistencies in exposures.

My point is, why don't professional and amateur photographers alike read the instructions for their new lenses and work out what is packaging and what are accessories for the lens? Even now, 20 years later, people are still walking about taking pictures with the lens hood fitted back to front! Are these the photographers who are always complaining that they have a 'bad' lens?

Please, don't show your ignorance – fit your hood in the correct position and your pictures may look 100% better!

Rob Deyes, East Riding of Yorkshire

A good point, Rob. I'd rather leave my lens hood at home than struggle to use the lens with the hood on backwards!

– **Nigel Atherton, Editor**

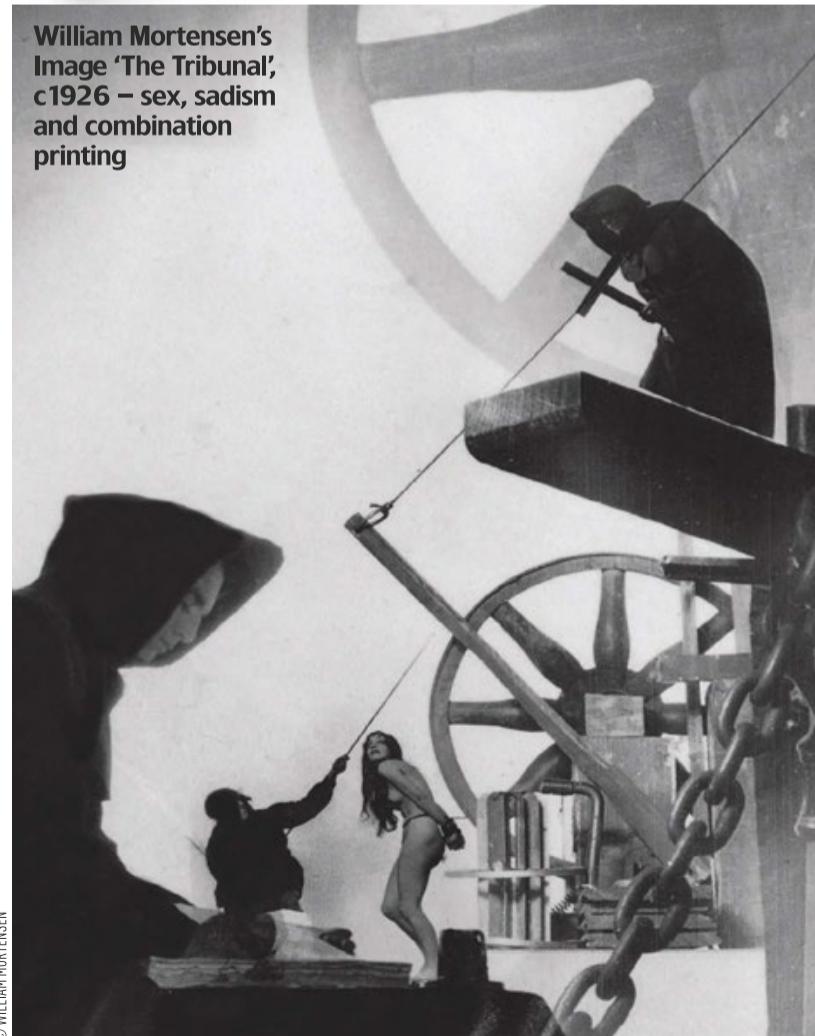


Win!

With ultra-fast performance, the new Samsung 16GB EVO SD card, Class 10, Grade 1, offers up to 48MB/sec transfer speed and has a ten-year warranty. www.samsung.com

SAMSUNG

William Mortensen's Image 'The Tribunal', c1926 – sex, sadism and combination printing



Not a photograph

With reference to Sjoerd Stellingwerf's picture in *Creative Photoshop*, AP 29 November, I suspect Leonardo da Vinci could have produced an image of a young lady chewing gum. No doubt the absence of chewing gum is what prevented a fine painter from producing a similar image.

Also in the same issue, Damien Demolder's use of Photoshop in *Appraisal* to improve Hayri Kodal's photograph of a ladybird is commendable. But if you can't make the image with the camera, then don't. Sjoerd Stellingwerf should buy some paintbrushes. His 'Chewing Gum Bubble' is not a photograph, however clever.

Michael Cheesman, Essex

As Roger Hicks' article on William Mortensen reminds us (AP 17 January), the debate over whether a

montage made from elements of different photographs is still a photograph precedes Photoshop by at least a century. To me, if it's created through photographic means, then it has a place in AP. Although not everyone likes such constructed imagery, many enthusiasts enjoy it and it is a thriving sub-genre within the camera club community

– Nigel Atherton, Editor

Less is more

One morning recently, I took out a 1960s Pentax Spotmatic and set the aperture and shutter speeds according to the Sunny 16 rule, and the lens to the hyperfocal position. On my travels, I saw a bus that I wanted to photograph, so I whipped the Spotmatic out, wound on the film and got the shot.

Later that day, I took my Olympus OM-D E-M5 out and saw another bus I wanted to photograph. After touching the shutter release the camera came to life, then switched from the back panel to the eyepiece. The lens then hunted, decided it was in focus and finally I was in a position to take the picture, by which time the bus had long gone.

If I had used the Spotmatic

that afternoon, I would have got the shot. Sometimes, less is more.

Andrew S Redding, via email

Missing a trick?

As much as I enjoy the ease of use that my Canon DSLR kit affords, I also derive great pleasure from old film cameras (especially those lacking meters) that force me to use my head. How I'd love a no-frills camera producing results similar to the high-end models I see in AP every week, but at a fraction of the price. Is it me, or are camera makers missing a trick?

Bill Ward, Glasgow

The new all-manual Leica M-A seemed the perfect answer until I got to the 'fraction of the price' bit! I've lost count of the photographers who have expressed a yearning for an affordable digital version of the Nikon FM, and I'm sure if Nikon made one (or Canon made a digital F-1) they'd be surprised by its popularity. But as niche products they could never be as cheap as you might hope – Nigel Atherton, Editor

Kit prices

While looking at camera prices in AP, I have noticed

that kit prices are always at their highest when a new model is introduced. People rush out and buy the latest kit, and then three months later sales collapse. Surely it would make sense to wait six months and then buy your kit. For example, the Pentax K-50 cost £599 when new, and now you can get your hands on one for £399. That's a £200 saving just one year later. I could never understand the mentality behind this.

Gerald Tait, Manchester

The laws of supply and demand dictate that when something is new and demand exceeds supply, prices stay high, then come down once initial demand is satiated and supply levels rise. It's the same with all consumer products. As for why aren't people prepared to wait, this is probably down to a combination of early adopters wanting to be first to own one, and people needing a camera for a specific reason (a wedding or holiday, for example) and buying the one that best fulfils their needs at the time they need it – Nigel Atherton, Editor

In next week's issue

Classics revisited
We recreate Bob Carlos Clarke's image
'Black Is My True Love's Heart'

On sale Tuesday 3 February

BLACK & WHITE SPECIAL

Choosing black & white

Michael Freeman on how to develop a keen eye for monochrome

Master of mono

Billy Currie reveals the creative process behind his award-winning architectural images

The great master

Photographer and film-maker Fan Ho looks back at the work that has made his name

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For the love of lan

Landscape Photographer of the Year winner **Mark Littlejohn** explains his photographic philosophy and what he hopes the future holds for him. He talks to **Andrew James**

The distinctive landscape work of Lake District-based Mark Littlejohn has been gaining popularity and plaudits since he first picked up a compact camera with nothing more than a wish to record what he saw on his regular countryside jaunts. In fact, we featured Mark in AP only 18 months ago and discovered how his eye-catching, moody style was taking shape.

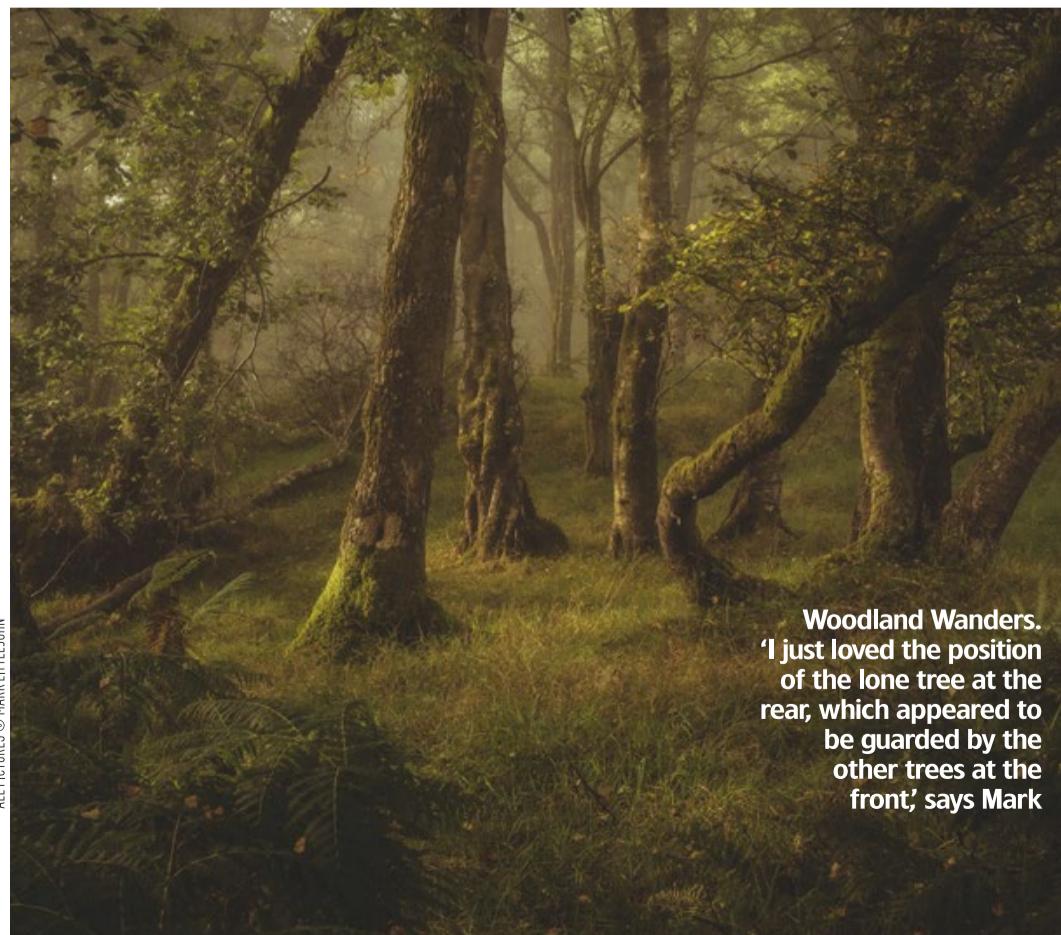
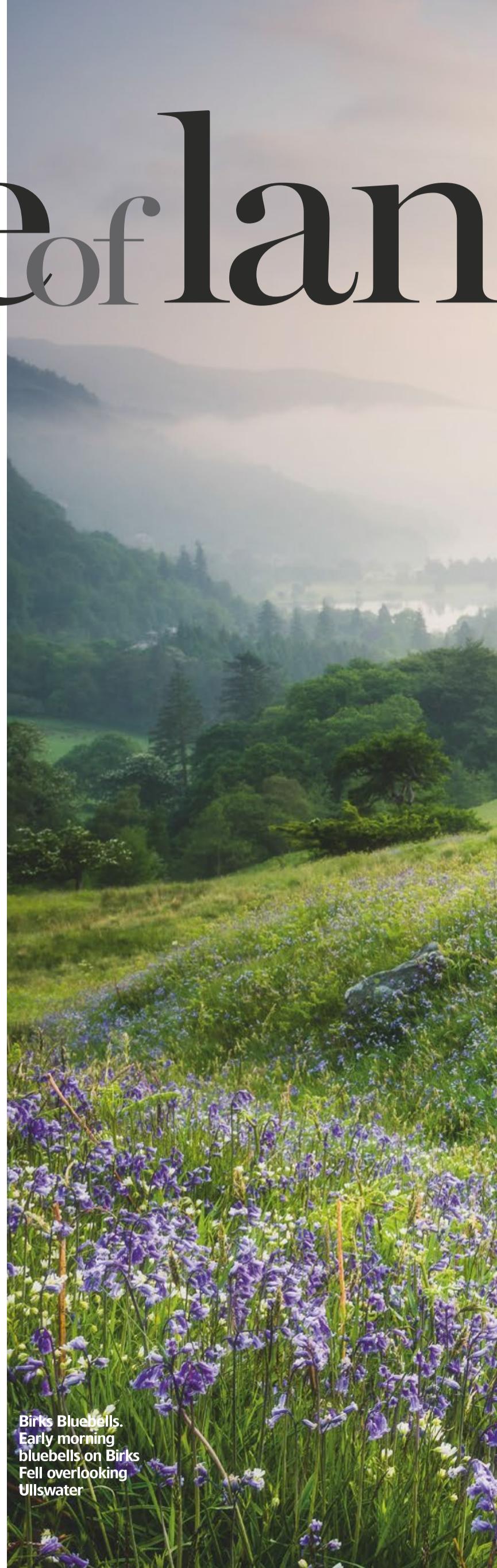
We pride ourselves on bringing new photographic talent to your attention and the fact that Mark has just won the Take a view Landscape Photographer of the Year competition gives us the perfect excuse to pick up our conversation with him again.

For those readers who missed the original interview, let's recap. Mark is a 50-plus latecomer to photography, who merged a love of the great outdoors with a creative urge to capture the beautiful

scenery close to his home. His work quickly progressed and his Facebook following grew with it. His current standing is a very impressive 11,135 followers.

Mark's very distinctive style of ultra-moody images, frequently featuring woodlands or misty lakes, evokes a sense of mystery and a little fantasy. He claims never to have set out to create a particular style; he simply follows his passion for light and takes pictures that he likes. If other people like them too, then he rates that as a bonus.

'To be a successful landscape photographer I think that, first and foremost, you have to love the countryside,' explains Mark. 'I love being out there, whether it's a grey day or a sunny one. For me, it's being out in the environment that is all-important, although of course it is the moments when the light lifts the landscape that I'm always searching for.'



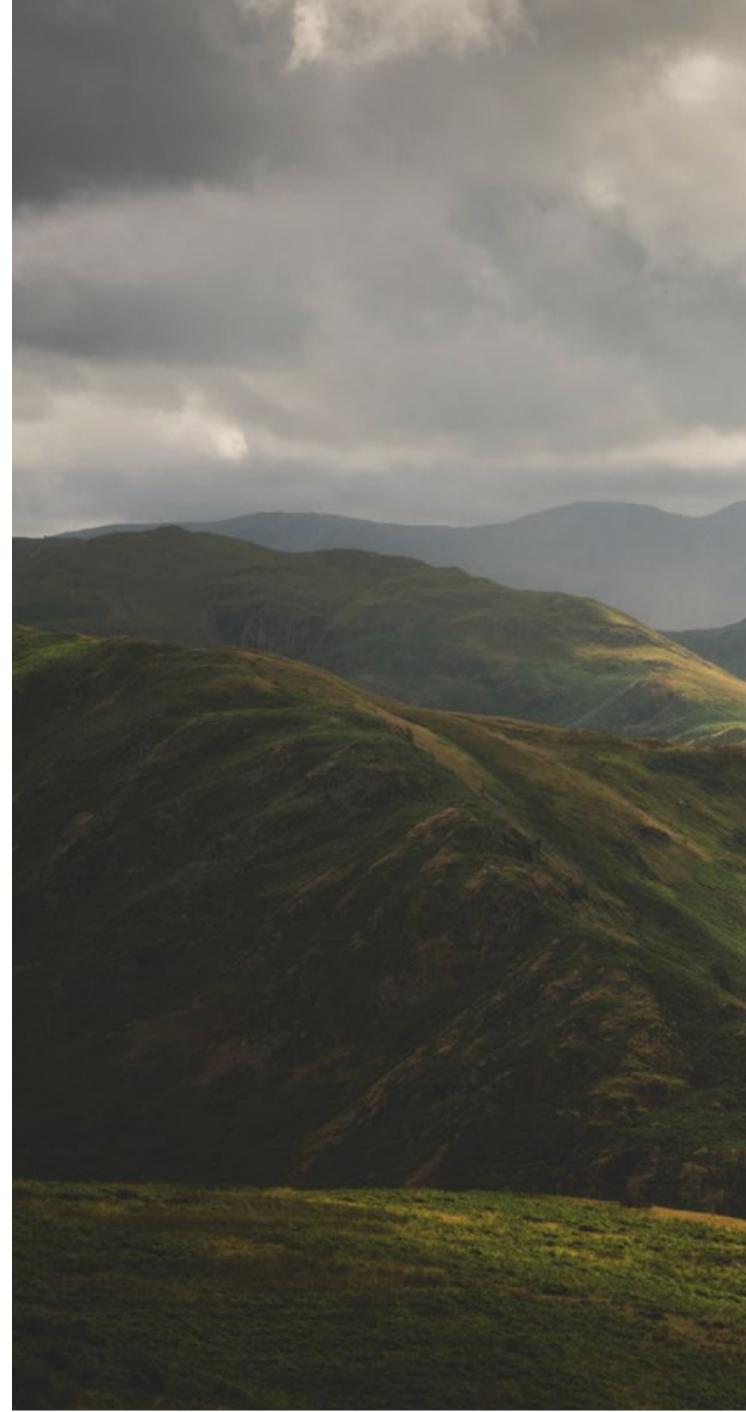
Woodland Wanders.
'I just loved the position of the lone tree at the rear, which appeared to be guarded by the other trees at the front,' says Mark



Birks Bluebells.
Early morning bluebells on Birks Fell overlooking Ullswater

Landscapes





While Mark is lucky enough to have the Lake District as his immediate playground, he's often very focused on the smaller scenes around him that aren't necessarily locations recognised by everyone.

'If you look through my shots, you will see that many of them are taken at places you could easily walk by,' he says. 'But I try to capture the light at a given moment and hopefully that makes them special. If you love photography then you need to appreciate every aspect of light. It shouldn't simply be a case of going out and trying to take photos of all the iconic places.'

Mark acknowledges the fact that the landscape on his doorstep has been a telling factor in his rapid development as a photographer, but he believes that everyone starting out should look at the local environment for inspiration. 'It doesn't really matter where you are – what really counts is gaining an appreciation for how the light affects the places you know,' he states. 'It might be your local wood or an urban environment if you live

in a city, but the simple truth is light can change the nature of a place so that it rarely looks the same twice. These are the things that you need to become aware of if you want to be successful at capturing images in a way that appeals to others. I just love the way a scene can change during the course of the year, with different seasons and light.'

The other factor Mark points out is that by concentrating on places close to where you live, it's much easier to react to the kind of conditions that will help create a memorable photograph.

Landscape photographer of the year

Winning the 2014 Landscape Photographer of the Year award was something of a shock to Mark. Although he has entered images previously, his main hope was to get an image in the book (he's had five images previously included) that is produced from the winning entries. In fact, he confesses that he nearly didn't bother to enter this year at all because he was concerned that he

Above left: Neist Point Sunset.
'This long-exposure shot was taken just before sunset, from a slightly precarious viewpoint below the upper cliffs and on the edge of the lower ones,' says Mark

Above right: Martindale in Cumbria. 'I've wanted this shot for a while,' says Mark. 'I had to run through a hail storm to get to this vantage point just as the hail passed. I wanted to get the road shining in the fresh sunlight like a silver ribbon draped over the hillside'

might start adapting his images to suit the competition, as opposed to shooting things how he wanted.

'It's a strange feeling and I really don't feel that I've worked hard enough for it,' he reveals. 'I'm not complaining of course, and it was a wonderful feeling, not just to win the competition but then to hear so many great photographers – people whose work I admire – saying some lovely things about my image.'

Although Mark is something of a late starter when it comes to photography, he is certainly happy that it is shifting towards a point where he might be able to make a full-time living from it. He is already doing one-to-ones and group tuition sessions in the Lakes with photographers keen to tap into the Littlejohn magic.

Mark adds: 'I am lucky enough to work part-time on the steamers at Ullswater with a great bunch of people and I always have my cameras at the ready. But being out in the countryside with my camera is my passion – it's what I absolutely love and I think there's no doubt that I will end up doing it full-time eventually. I'm not planning anything, so it'll be a natural drift in that direction if it happens.'

'I like to be spontaneous... if that means handholding and using a higher ISO, I'll do it'



'But when I look at a lot of the big names, they've been shooting as professionals for 20 or 30 years, which means they've had more opportunity to visit amazing places around the world and this is definitely something that I would like to do. I am conscious that being over 50 means I have some catching up to do before it's too late,' he jokes.

The genuinely refreshing thing about Mark is that he has a very open-minded approach to how he takes and processes his landscapes. He is very much an instinctive photographer, rather than one who has stuck rigidly to a rulebook. He first used a DSLR in February 2010, so he has gone from zero knowledge to winning the title every landscaper would love to have in just under five years.

'I've come to this late in life so maybe I have more of an open mind,' he says. 'I don't go out shooting with a plan in my mind – I just see something and decide then and there if I like it.'

Learning curve

Mark admits that his photographic development has been based very much on trial and error, rather than reading any books or

Mark on his method of processing

WHEN it comes to processing, Mark is happy to use his imagination a little, although he points out that he would never put things in or take things out of any scene. In that sense, his images are very truthful.

'When I am taking a photograph, I can always envisage in my mind's eye what it might look like with processing,' he explains. 'I use Lightroom and I keep my processing very simple. When I find something I like, I'll usually create a preset for it too, so it's there ready to apply to another image if I need it.'

'I rarely crop, but if I do it's often square – as my winning shot of the stream was. More than anything, I am likely to work with split toning, in order to give the image something a little different. I think this is the area I am really going to be concentrating on more and more.'

I'm just trying to enhance the mood of the image with the colour work.

'I set the saturation value for both the highlights and shadows to something between 10 and 25. Maybe once in a blue moon I'll go higher, but generally it's kept between those figures. Then I'll just play with the sliders and the balance until I find a colour combination that I think works for the scene.'

'Other than this, the most likely thing I will do is apply a bit of extra saturation or desaturation to certain hues right at the end. Overall, I keep it simple because that's all I know what to do – it works and other people seem to like my results. As my background was working in forensics and I had to spend a lot of time at computers, the last thing I want to do is spend hours on them now. I'd rather be out shooting.'





I Look Up to Him, but Down on Him.
'This is a drive-by image,' says Mark 'I loved the dynamics of these three horses and it reminded me of the old *Two Ronnies* sketch'

► magazines on the subject, and he doesn't like the trend for overanalysing images. This single-minded approach with no preconceptions about how you should or shouldn't take a landscape photograph is probably a key element in his continuing success.

Indeed, you only need to consider his winning image – a photograph shot in appalling conditions in Scotland (see right). It was taken handheld with his DSLR's sensitivity bumped up to ISO 800 to avoid any problems with camera movement. Not only that, but the image itself is shot at f/5.6 rather than the more usual f/11 or f/16 recommended by every landscape photography lesson you'll ever read.

As far as Mark is concerned, none of the numbers really matters. What does matter is the end result, which from Mark's perspective is just that he likes the photograph, not that it wins major competitions.

'For me, what it is and always will be about is whether I like the image,' he explains. 'I like to be spontaneous, simply trying to capture a moment, and if that means handholding and shooting at a higher ISO then I'll do it.'

The way in which Mark works is a fairly simple process. He gets up early whenever possible and wanders around the countryside in search of his next image. He looks

at every scene with a clear mind, studying how the light is playing on the elements.

'I close my left eye and look all around,' he explains. 'I'll look up and down at the scene and from side-to-side, just taking it all in, and once I decide I like it I'll really consider the composition.' While it's possible he'll shoot handheld, when light levels are too low to allow it he will set up a tripod and work in a more conventional landscaper's way. 'You still have to get the basics right,' he says.

'I know that I am heading towards a more painterly approach,' he explains. 'It's difficult to put into words, but I am not sticking rigidly to exactly what the scene was like. I know there can be a slightly surreal or abstract quality to the photos, and I've heard people say there's a *Lord of the Rings* feel to some images – particularly my woodland scenes.'

Also, Mark isn't worried about what he refers to as 'the truth'. This is an important element in his landscape photography and he refers to Joe Cornish, someone who he admires immensely. 'Joe's work is wonderful and I was once struck by a comment he made about being a faithful servant to the truth. I know I'm certainly not this,' he acknowledges. 'I'm just happy following my passion the way it suits me.'

Mark on his winning image

'THE DAY I took my winning shot, I got up at 1am and the rain was bouncing off the ground,' says Mark. 'I then headed up to Glencoe with my friends Billy Currie and Scott Robertson. During the morning, the stream on the hillside became obvious. I could see the beginning of it and the end of it, so I just looked up and shot it with my 85mm lens. Less than an hour later it was gone.'

'To make sure that I had a fast enough shutter speed, I was forced to push the camera's ISO up to 800, but the D800 is fine with that – it can take it. The rain was pouring down and I was shooting through that so the photograph was never going to be 100% sharp anyway – it was all about the mood of the fleeting moment. That's all that appealed.'

'When I came back from that session I was in a bit of a grumpy mood because of the horrendous weather we'd had to endure. For that reason, I didn't even process the images from the day for about a month, so it was some time later before I came back to that scene.'



AP



Mark Littlejohn is a landscape photographer based on the edge of the Lake District. He specialises in moody, atmospheric, early morning conditions and offers bespoke one-to-one workshops and Lakeland tours. To see more of Mark's work, visit his website at www.markljphotography.co.uk and www.500px.com/MarkLJ

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APPOY 2014 Amateur Photographer OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

ARCHITECTURAL EXTERIORS

We look at the top 30 images from round 10, **Building Blocks**, and reveal the overall winner of APOY 2014

Ferdinand von Korff from Co Wicklow in Ireland is the winner of round 10, Building Blocks, of APOY 2014. Ferdinand will receive an Olympus OM-D E-M10 with a 14-42mm EZ Pancake zoom, a 45mm f/1.8 portrait lens, a 40-150mm zoom, a 9mm fisheye lens, a macro adapter and a street case in which to carry it all. That's a total retail price of £1,200.

The E-M10 has a 16.1-million-pixel, four thirds-sized CMOS sensor and a TruePic VII image-processing system, while the 1.44-million-dot EVF displays a 100% field of view and has a 120fps refresh rate. The 14-42mm EZ Pancake zoom lens is a slim and compact optic that is equivalent to a 28-84mm lens in the 35mm format.

The 45mm f/1.8 portrait optic is ideal for low-light people shots without flash, while the 40-150mm zoom has high-speed AF and is optimised for movies and stills. The 9mm fisheye lens is ideal for capturing wideangle scenes.

Our second-placed winner is Gerard Sexton, from Wallingford in Oxfordshire. He will receive an Olympus Pen E-PL5 camera plus a 14-42mm and 40-150mm twin-lens zoom kit worth £500.

The E-PL5 offers serious image quality with its powerful 16.1-million-pixel sensor and a new OM-D component in the TruePic VI image processor. The camera has lightning-fast autofocus, a touch-sensitive LCD screen and full HD video.

Michael Farley from London takes third place in this round. He wins an Olympus Stylus SP-100EE Ultra Zoom camera, with an impressive 16-million-pixel sensor and 3in LCD screen. The camera includes a handy autofocus lock so you need never lose a shot due to fuzzy focusing. The camera features a 50x optical Ultra Zoom lens with a focal length ranging from 24mm to 1,200mm, and built-in Dot Sight to make it easier to focus on subjects.



1 Ferdinand von Korff Ireland 50pts

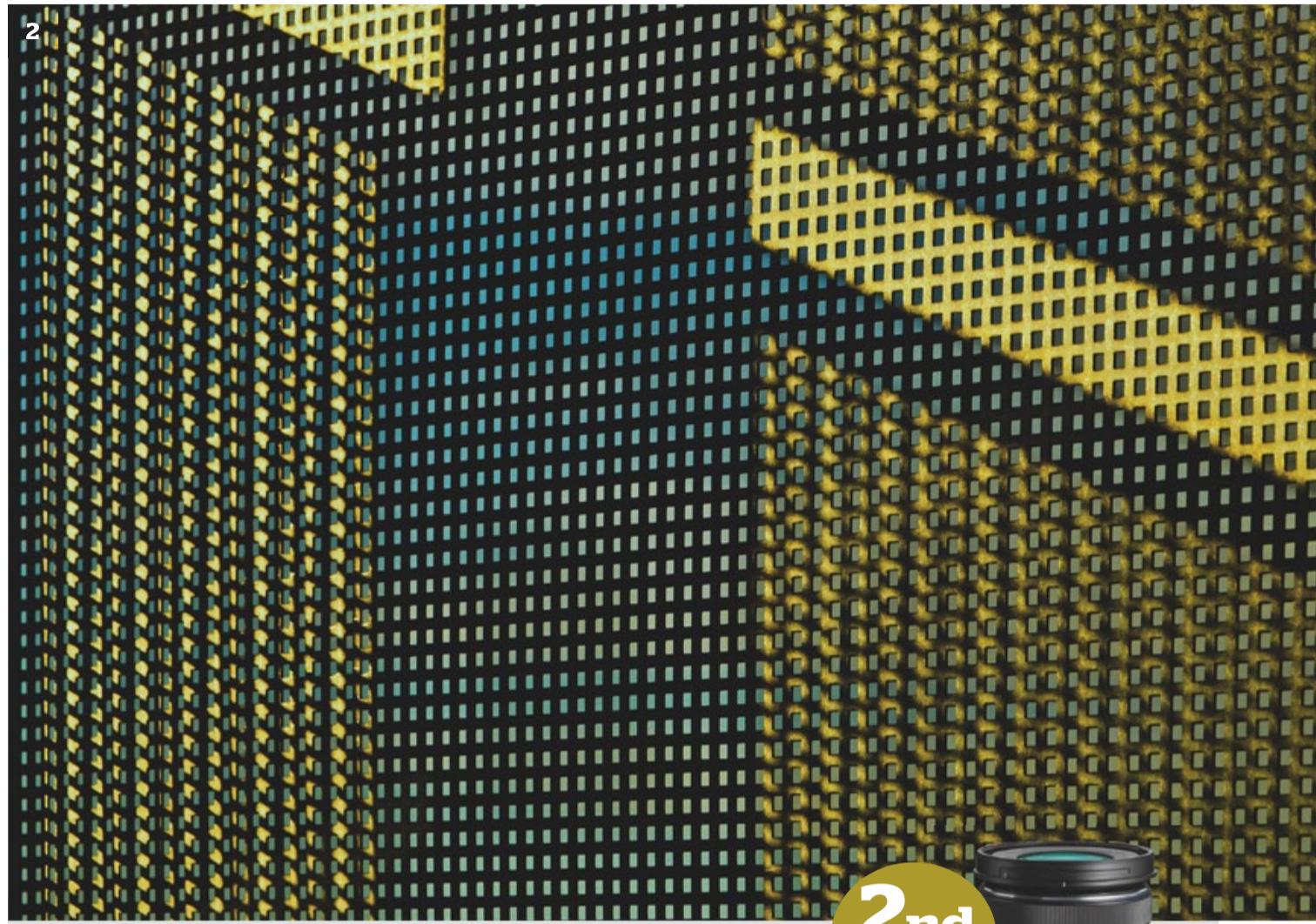
Canon EOS 400D, 18mm, 1/50sec at f/5.6, ISO 200

Taking a photograph of architecture may seem like a simple task, but there's so much more to it than you may think. Even when you've found a subject you still need to find a way of shooting it in a way that's visually engaging and, above all, unique. Ferdinand's method may not be unique, but it takes a photographer with a strong eye to use a well-worn technique and put an individual stamp on it. The monochrome, light and cloud are perfect elements in this winning shot.

The 2014 leaderboard

The points from this final round of APOY have been awarded and the result is that Dan Deakin is the overall winner of APOY 2014. Dan also won the award in APOY 2012 and took second place in 2013. The APOY 2014 runner-up is Mark Helliwell, with Chris Wood in third place.

1	Dan Deakin	210pts	6	Gerard Sexton	166pts
2	Mark Helliwell	193pts	7	Aaron Bennett	151pts
3	Chris Wood	185pts	7	Jevgenijs Scolokovs	151pts
4	Angela Nelson	180pts	9	Adrian Mills	139pts
4	Bertrand Chombart	180pts	10	Farid Sani	127pts

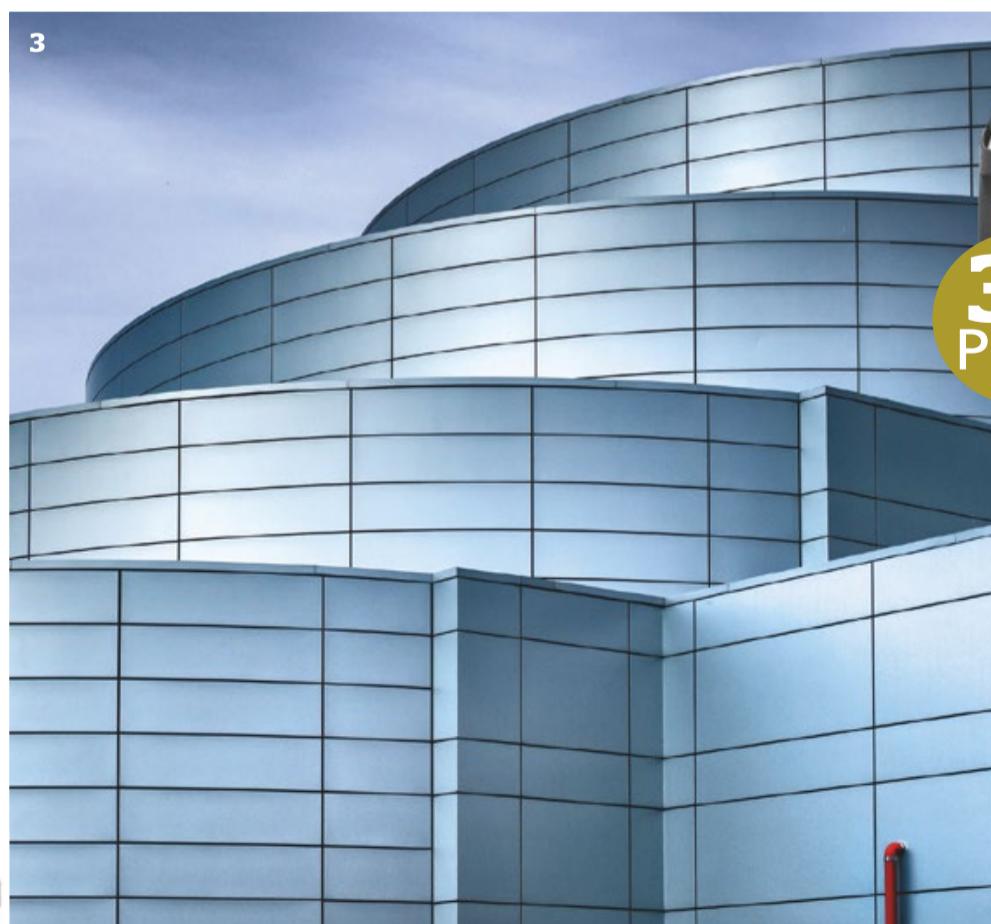


2 Gerard Sexton Oxfordshire 49pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 70-200mm, 1/1000sec at f/11, ISO 500

As already mentioned, it's important to try to find a unique take when photographing architecture. Here Gerard has taken the abstract approach and created an absorbing image of the aluminium cladding around a stairwell on a bridge spanning the Royal Victoria Dock in East London. It's the contrast of tones that makes this shot fantastic. Add to that the near-fractal nature of the structure and you have a picture that demands repeated viewing. With all this in mind, we decided it had to take second place.

2nd
PRIZE



3 Michael Farley

London 49pts

Olympus OM-D E-M10, 25mm, 1/2000sec at f/5, ISO 200

This is a beautiful shot. It was taken at the rear of a car park in Michael's home town of Croydon in Greater London. In fact, it was one of the first exposures he made with his new Olympus camera. One of the key elements of this image is small: the red pipe in the bottom-right corner.

3rd
PRIZE



4 Pesso Neto Portugal 47pts

Canon EOS 500D, 18-270mm, 1/160sec at f/8, ISO 100

Pesso's image, called 'Coloured Dreams' is a wonderfully balanced and framed composition

4



5



5 Steven Robinson South Yorkshire 46pts

Ricoh GR Digital, 18.3mm, 1/350sec at f/8, ISO 400

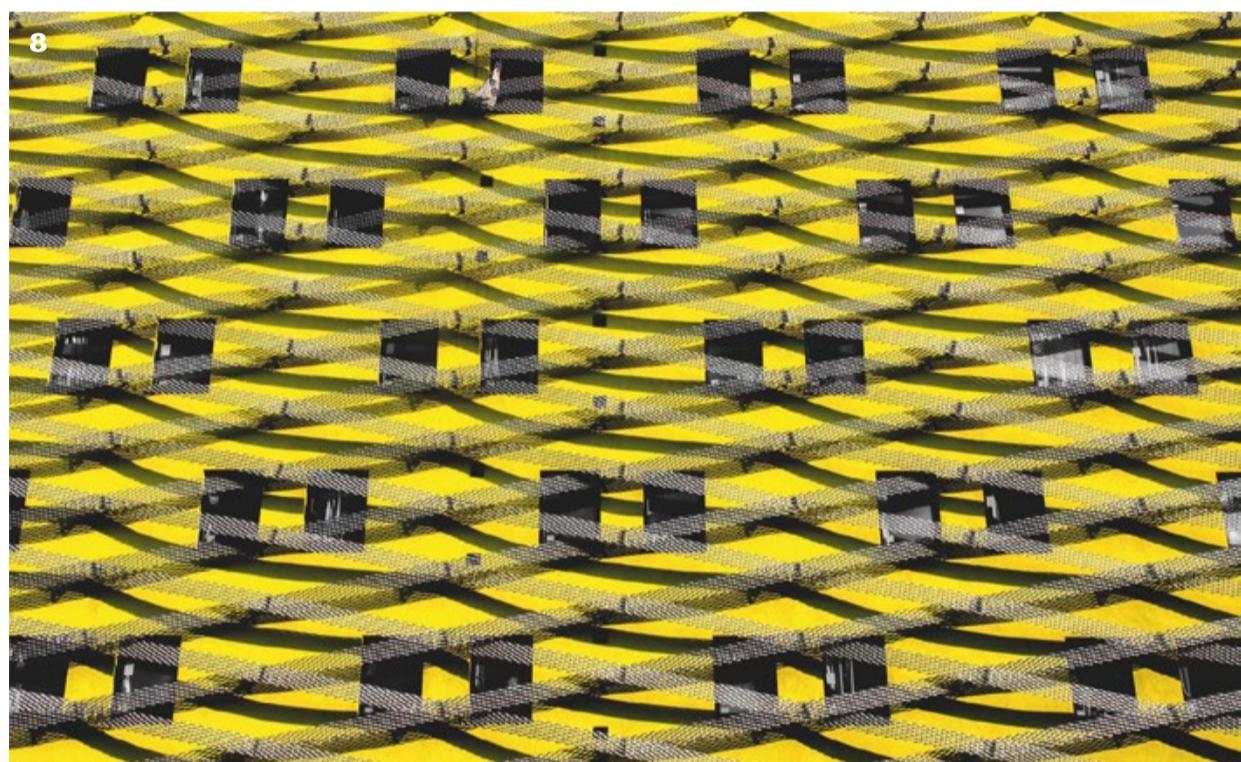
Steven's image shows a detail of the 'Cheese Grater' car park in Sheffield. Removing the colour from the image gives us a greater sense of the unusual design of the building

6 Bertrand Chombart France 45pts

Nikon D800E, 24-85mm, 179secs at f/8, ISO 200

The bridge has been perfectly aligned in the shot to match and connect with the horizon

8



7 Diogo Ferreira Portugal 44pts

Olympus OM-D E-M5, 12-50mm, 182secs at f/5.6, ISO 200

This image of the hotel Estoril Sol Residence was shot with 10-stop and 6-stop ND to create a 16-stop, 3min-long exposure

8 Peter Murrell London 43pts

Nikon D300S, 17-55mm, 1/125sec at f/10, ISO 200

The woven aluminium exterior mesh, shadows and bright exterior have all come together to create a dizzying yet engaging image

9 Siresendu Gayen India 42pts

Nikon D80, 18-135mm, 1/250sec at f/10, ISO 250

This is a perfectly timed shot. Including the figure on the steps gives this vibrant scene a sense of narrative and purpose

10 Darren Moore Surrey 41pts

Nikon D7000, 17-70mm, 40secs at f/11, ISO 100, ND filter

There is great depth to this image, aided by the inclusion of plenty of space and a geometrically composed central subject

11 Iuliana Silvi West Yorkshire 40pts

Nikon D3000, 18-55mm, 1/100sec at f/8, ISO 200

Taken in the new Library of Birmingham, Iuliana has captured the playful interaction between the straight lines and curved shapes

12 Michael Taylor West Midlands 39pts

Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ5, 280mm, 1/250sec at f/11, ISO 100

Michael says he couldn't resist the geometric lines and harmony of colours of this image

13



12



13 Mark Cornick Surrey 38pts

Canon EOS 550D, 10-20mm, 40secs at f/8, ISO 100, Lee Filters Big Stopper, tripod

While others may have chosen to remove the steps on the left, Mark has kept them in, resulting in a dynamic composition

14 Vlad Georgescu West Yorkshire 37pts

Nikon 5100, 16-85mm, 1/320sec at f/8, ISO 400

Here we have another shot of the 'Cheese Grater' car park in Sheffield. Similarly, we find there is great virtue in getting right up close

15 Jay Heiser USA 36pts

Canon EOS 50D, 70-300mm, 1/250sec at f/9, ISO 200

This is a thrillingly atmospheric shot taken at an abandoned coal-processing facility

16 David Queenan West Lothian 35pts

Nikon D610, 18-35mm, 30secs at f/22, ISO 100, Lee Filters Big Stopper, tripod

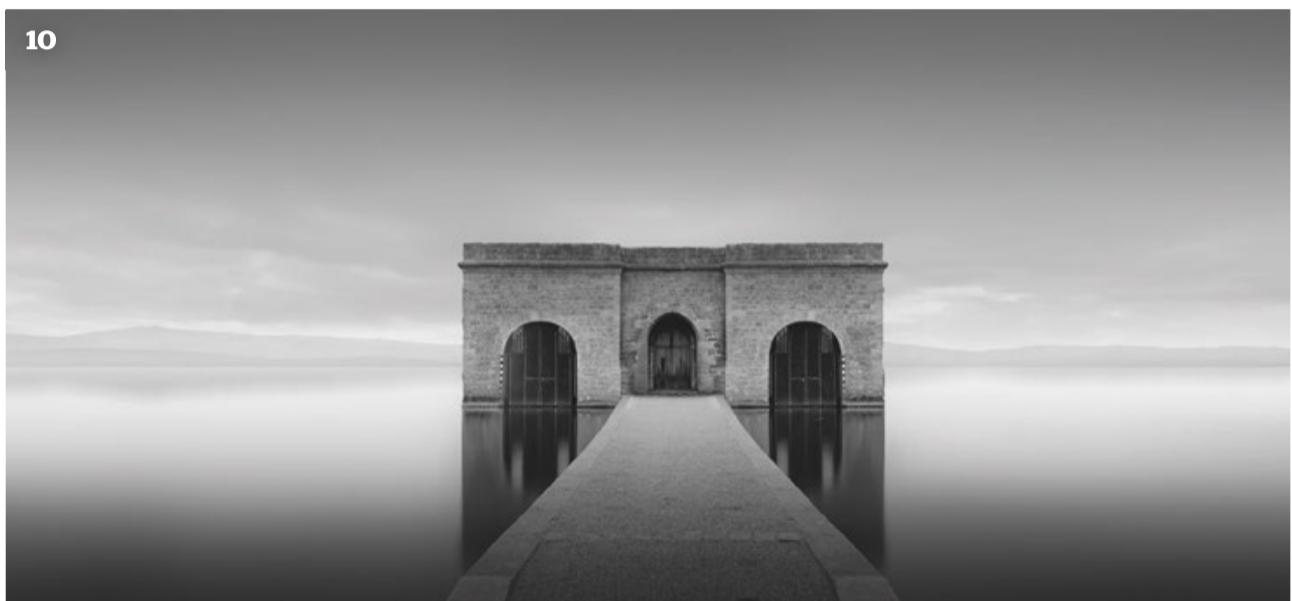
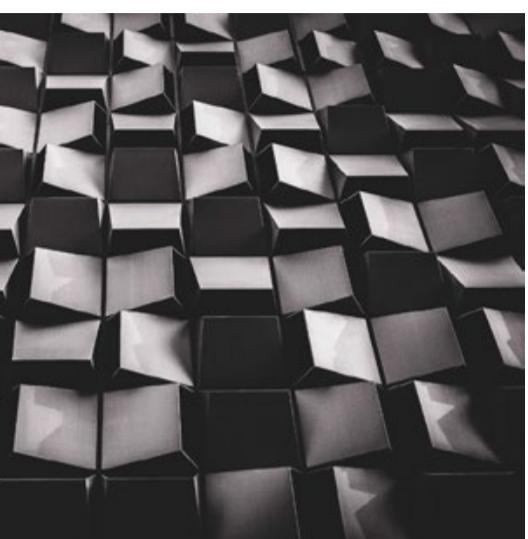
David shot this building in Edinburgh at just the right angle to anchor it perfectly within the frame

17 Adrian Mills East Sussex 34pts

Pentax K-5, 12-24mm, 1/1250sec at f/7.1, ISO 100

Old and new designs clash in this moody and nicely composed image taken in London





18 Kobi Amiel Israel 33pts

Canon EOS 5D, 50mm, 1/80sec at f/4, ISO 1000

Using a wideangle lens has meant that Kobi has been able to feature the bicycle and a good amount of architectural detail



19 Tomer Eliash Israel 32pts

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 100

Like Kobi's image (right), this shot was captured at the Tel-Aviv Museum of Art. Converting the shot to monochrome has added real atmosphere to the scene

20 Van Hieu Nguyen Norfolk 31pts

Nikon D3100, 35mm, 1/250sec at f/1.8, ISO 200

Shooting on a slant has emphasised the abstract nature of this building. Also, the angled windows create depth



21 Russ Barnes West Midlands 30pts

Nikon D700, 24mm (tilt and shift), 1/500sec at f/8, ISO 200

This is a beautifully timed shot from Russ. It is also perfectly exposed and framed

22 Tim Green Wiltshire 29pts

Fujifilm X-T1, 18-55mm, 1/450sec at f/9, ISO 200

Again we see the benefits of shooting at an angle. Here it gives the structure a real degree of scale



23 Bob Riach Lincolnshire 28pts

Sony NEX-7, 18-55mm, 30secs at f/4, ISO 400

This shot of Wrawby Windmill is Lincolnshire has a dreamlike quality, particularly in the stars and beautiful silhouettes



24 Ova Hamer Argentina 27pts

Nikon P7000, 37mm, 1/150sec at f/5.6, ISO 300

This is a very graphic shot. Ova has exposed in just the right way in order to silhouette the stairs but retain a small amount of detail in the building on the left



25 Amri Arfianto UAE 26pts

Fujifilm X-T1, 10-24mm, 15secs at f/16, ISO 200

With this exposure and angle, Amri's building takes on a monolithic quality



26 Heather Lynn USA 25pts

Nikon D800, 17-55mm, 1/4sec at f/2.8

The toning on this image has emphasised the Gothic nature of this 100-year-old church in Boulder, Montana, against a winter backdrop



27 Håkan Olofsson Sweden 24pts

Nikon D610, 70-200mm, 1/640sec at f/4, ISO 100

A simple, clean composition allows the interplay of shapes to speak for themselves



28 Marino Reljica Kostic Croatia 23pts

Olympus E-420, 70-300mm, 1/500sec at f/7.1, ISO 100

The colours are the obvious virtue in this scene. The bright light of day has rendered them vivid and absorbing



29 Mike Hughes Cumbria 22pts

Nikon D700, 24-120mm, 1/800sec at f/7.1, ISO 500

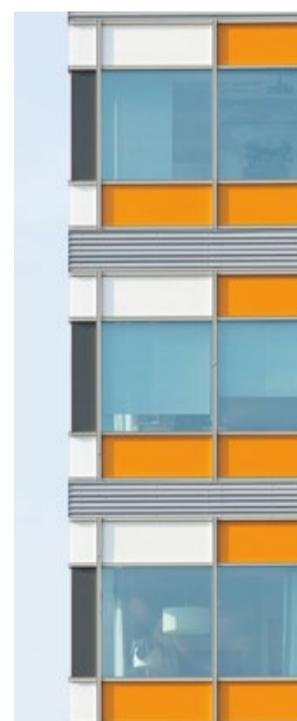
Taken in Brooklyn, New York, this a great shot from Mike. The border and tones make it look like it could have been photographed decades ago

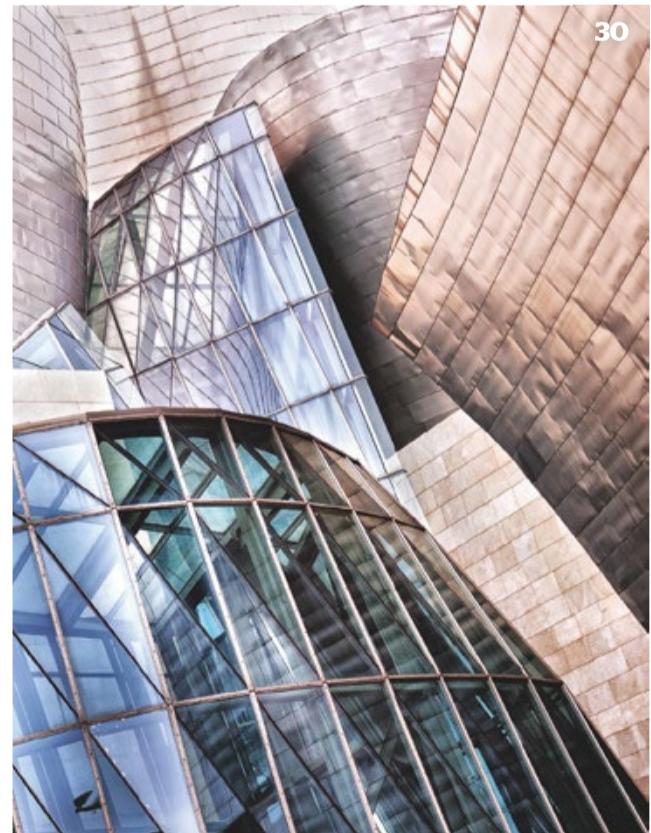
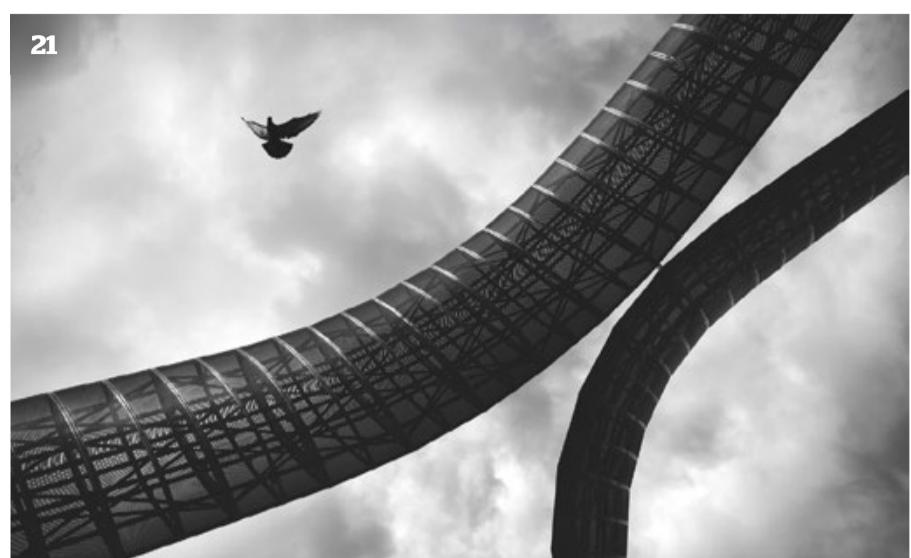


30 Tony Cook Gloucestershire 21pts

Panasonic Lumix DMC-G1, 14-45mm, 1/200sec at f/5.6, ISO 100

As Tony says, the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, lends itself to abstract and impressionistic interpretations





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Evening class



Photoshop guru **Martin Evening** sorts out your photo-editing and post-processing problems

Lifting the shadows

I LIKE this classic composition from Carla Maue. Note how the stone wall leads the eye in from the left and meanders through the valley, with the flow continued by a line of trees stretching further into the distance. Obviously it was necessary to remove the sensor marks that can be seen here. However, I also needed to lighten the foreground without overexposing the sky.

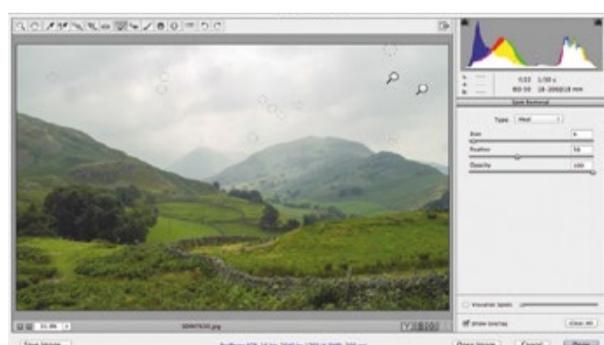
This is where graduated filter adjustments come into use. Most landscape images will benefit from these because, while our eyes interpret a scene by compensating for the difference in brightness between the ground and the sky, the camera records everything as it is. A soft-edged darkening vignette can help balance out this difference without it appearing unnatural.

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AFTER



BEFORE



1 Camera Raw spotting

I began by lightening the image, but I also noticed that the sensor was quite dirty and there were a couple of hairs that needed removing. To do this, I selected the Spot Removal tool, then clicked and dragged to remove the hairs and just clicked repeatedly to remove the smaller spots.

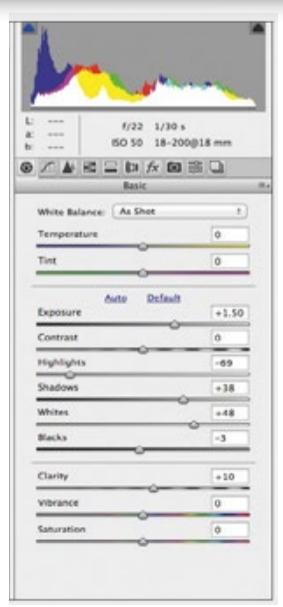


2 Add a darkening gradient

Next, I added a graduated filter adjustment to the sky and set the Exposure to -1.00 and the Highlights to -20, which darkened the clouds in the sky. I also adjusted the Temperature and Tint sliders to make the sky a little less magenta and slightly cooler in colour.

3 Add more contrast

Finally, I went to the Basic panel where I refined the tone adjustments. I reduced the Highlights to bring out more detail in the clouds and boosted the Shadows slider to bring out more shadow detail. I also fine-tuned the Whites and Blacks sliders to optimise the tone contrast.





BEFORE

AFTER

A tight crop

WHILE working on Geoff France's photograph, I used an edited version he had supplied as guidance, in which he chose to closely crop this photograph and isolate the five girls in this scene from their surroundings. The final photograph tells a clearer story in which it appears that the girl on the left is looking over to her four friends for inspiration as they are scribbling away.

One little trick I used here was to apply a localised Clarity adjustment to the shadows. I did this in order to make the edges appear sharper and more clearly defined. This was also a good photographic example with which to demonstrate again the power of Upright adjustments in Camera Raw, and how this can be used to straighten converging vertical and horizontal lines.

1 Apply an Upright correction

The new Upright adjustment in Camera Raw can often work wonders at automatically straightening horizontal and vertical lines. With this photograph I clicked on the Full Upright button to apply the fullest type of Upright adjustment. However, I still had to apply a slight anti-clockwise rotation in the Manual section.

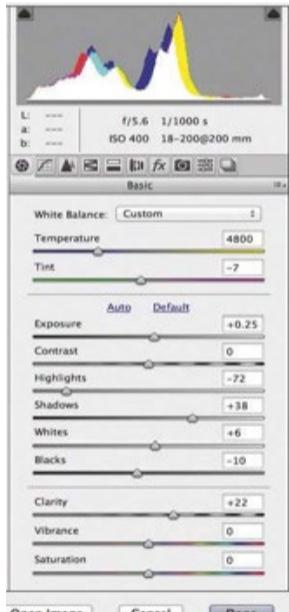


2 Crop the image

It was important to crop this photograph quite tightly in order to focus attention on the five girls and remove all the other distracting elements, such as the person who is standing on the left. I therefore selected the Crop tool in Camera Raw and dragged to define the area shown here and applied this to the photograph.

3 Adjust tone and white balance

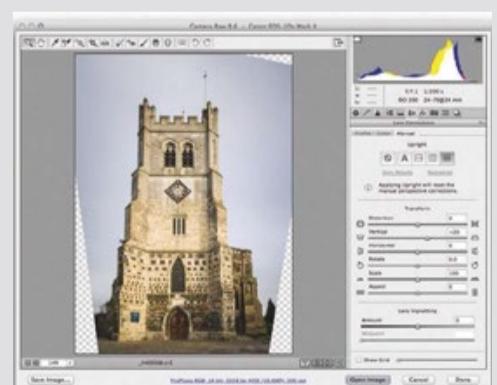
I selected the White Balance tool and clicked on a white sheet of paper to set a measured white balance. I also applied the other Basic panel tone adjustments shown here to optimise the image and add more contrast. I then selected the Adjustment Brush and applied a +100 Clarity adjustment to the shadows to make these stand out more.



Upright lens corrections

THE UPRIGHT lens corrections in the latest versions of Camera Raw and Lightroom can be used to correct perspective. The vertical and horizontal adjustments in the Upright process are actually quite sophisticated. Behind the scenes there are angle of view and centre of projection adjustments taking place. It's all to do with the fact that the interaction of one rotation movement can

have an impact on another, and such interactions can be complex. For example, think about what happens when you adjust the tilt and yaw on a camera tripod head, and you get an idea of the problem. With Upright adjustments, the aim is to correct the perspective in such a way that having the choice of four different methods should mean that at least one of these will work.



Martin Evening is a noted expert in both photography and digital imaging. He is well known in London for his fashion and beauty work, for which he has won several awards. Martin has worked with the Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom engineering teams over many years and is one of the founding members of a software design company. Visit www.martinevening.com

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Canada high



A year in Vancouver, Canada, gave **Dan Deakin** the tools he needed to win Amateur Photographer of the Year for the second time. He tells **Jon Stapley** his story

Dan Deakin has entered an image into every single round of our Amateur Photographer of the Year competition for the past five years. He was second in 2010, fifth in 2011, first in 2012, second in 2013 and now, once again, first in 2014, for which he wins £5,000 worth of Olympus kit. Let there be no doubt – discipline and hard graft pay off.

‘I didn’t think I’d won!’ Dan says from his home in Nottingham, where he sits atop a makeshift throne of prize cameras and

vouchers (probably). ‘I’d been in the lead for most of APOY 2014, but I didn’t score in three rounds this year.’ The last of these was round nine, which Dan admits shook his confidence a little. ‘I thought, “Oh damn! I haven’t done too well,” but I knew that round ten was a strong image, so I thought that as long as I could stay at the top or near the top there would be a chance.’

The secret to the competition, in Dan’s view, is consistency. You don’t have to be a master of all trades, but you do need to be able to produce something for a wide range of



ROUND 2
Animal planet



ROUND 3
World in motion

Top: A portrait of Joey – a dog belonging to Dan’s friend

Above: Dan took this image on the Vancouver Metro as the train left the station

Below: A view of downtown Vancouver at dusk from the roof of a tall building across the city

genres, many of which will likely be out of your comfort zone.

‘It’s definitely made me shoot stuff I wouldn’t otherwise have shot,’ Dan says. ‘Flowers – I wouldn’t ever shoot flowers other than for APOY. I’ve got a total of three shots of flowers, all of which have been competition entries! It just makes you acquire different skills.’

Vancouver

Since we last met Dan, he has returned from a year spent living in Vancouver, Canada. Inspired by work he saw online – he cites a

ROUND 7 In a faraway place





ROUND 1 Street life

Portuguese black & white street photographer named Rui Pahla (www.ruiopalha.com) – Dan set about creating a portfolio of similar images from his new city. And it paid off. Dan's image 'Kissing Couples' earned a hefty 49 points in APOY 2014's very first round – Street Life.

Despite this, when I use the term 'street' to describe the images, Dan mildly resists it. He instead suggests 'people in the urban landscape' as a better fit. Sounds like splitting hairs, but looking at his images you can see what he means. The people who feature are a smaller part of a larger story – that story being the city of Vancouver, which Dan had as his playground for a year.

'I always take my best photos when I'm travelling or going

somewhere new,' he says. 'We'd moved to a new city and it was all totally inspiring.'

Although he may not be entirely comfortable with calling it street photography, a significant proportion of Dan's shots from his time in Vancouver definitely have that sense of spontaneity to them. What sparked this off, as he tells it, was downgrading his equipment.

'I bought a little micro four thirds camera [a Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX7], and I took it everywhere,' he says. 'I took it to work, literally in my coat pocket. When you've just got this camera on you, that's probably not quite as good as my full-frame but not far off, and the light is good or something happens, you can just get your camera out.'

Most of Dan's entries for APOY 2014 were taken in Vancouver. During the time he and his family stayed there, he got to experience all four seasons, or as he refers to it, 'the full roster'.

'You can see the seasons change, and get the apps to tell you which way the sun's coming up at different times of year,' he recalls. 'I guess the motivation was that I wanted some really good stuff for my walls to remind me of our year there.'

Dan brings up his walls a fair bit during our conversation – they're the space where his best photos end up. He's looking at them as we speak.

'I've got a load of photos on my wall, and a lot are entries to



ROUND 4 By the sun and the moon



ROUND 5 Dawn & dusk

Top: A couple having a late-night kiss after the bars closed in Vancouver

Above centre: An image of Dan's son cooling down in a park fountain

Above: Winter sunset over the Vancouver skyline

Right: Wild flowers found in British Columbia

ROUND 6 Macro world



ROUND 8

The world in black & white



rounds from this year,' he says. He pauses to look around and a thought occurs. 'Actually, there are quite a few entries on my wall!'

His time in this big, beautiful, unfamiliar city allowed Dan to experiment in a number of other ways, too. One of his APOY successes was taken from a series of urban landscape panoramas he spent a month working on.

'That big panorama I took for the travel round [round seven], I had to get access to the top of one of the skyscrapers,' Dan says. 'It's the best viewpoint in the city, so it took quite a bit of mischief to get up there.'

When I ask what kind of mischief,

Dan took this photo of his older son 'rescuing' his younger son in a tunnel under a local railway line

Dan suffers an inexplicable attack of vagueness. 'Just, sort of, bending rules, talking to people,' he says, the smile audible in his voice. 'I managed to get up there three times. You want to get up there in perfect light, so if it was rubbish light I wouldn't go up there and use one of my "credits" to get to the top again.' He does not elucidate.

Whatever unorthodox methods Dan may or may not (a disclaimer for our readership in the Canadian police force) have used to get his results, that shot was worth it. How do we know? Because it's passed the Deakin test – it's up on his wall.

Closer to home

It's worth reiterating that Dan has entered an image into every single round of APOY for the past five years. It is, he says more than once, perhaps time for a break.

'I wasn't going to enter this year,' he explains, 'but I came second by one point last year!' He laughs at the memory. 'It was pretty frustrating, so I thought I'd have another go to see if I could do a little better this year, and it worked out.'

Interestingly, Dan admits that since he and his family returned from Vancouver, he's found it harder to get inspired to take photos.

'I haven't really had much inspiration since I got back,' he says. 'I've been busy at work, busy changing jobs, moving house, with the kids.'

Indeed, Dan's achievement and discipline in APOY is all the more

ROUND 10
Building blocks

Left: Taken at a power station using an infrared-modified DSLR

Below: Dan shot this image of the Vancouver skyline from under the Cambie Bridge

**ROUND 9**
Kept in the dark

impressive when you factor in raising two boys, one almost two years old and the other almost four – and he pauses more than once during our chat to tend to some urgent child emergency.

Understandably, these days his photography involves less charming his way into skyscrapers than it does family portraits.

'Most people wouldn't be interested in it,' he says. 'But those shots are priceless, because you can't go back six months, when your kid was half as old as he is now, and reshoot. If you don't shoot now, you don't get it at all.'

This isn't to say, however, that Dan has been sacrificing photography as his art form for the sake of recording his children – instead, he's been combining the two, and with some success. His entry for round eight, a shot of his sons in a tunnel, scored him a tidy 24 points.

'I try to apply the same sort of creativity,' he says. 'Try to make a piece of art out of a family portrait, or a kid in the landscape. One entry that I loved, the kids in that black and white tunnel [round eight], is a family portrait for me, but for other people it's just a black & white image that works.'

Dan never quite gives a definite answer as to whether this is truly his last APOY for the time being. Maybe in 2015 we'll see him shooting up the leaderboard again. But one thing is for certain: in the future, there will be plenty more images up on his walls.

AP

Dan's APOY scoreboard

Round 1 Street Life	Round 6 Macro World
Position 2	Position 38
Points 49	Points 13
Round 2 Animal	Round 7 In a Faraway
Planet	Place
Position 21	Position 18
Points 30	Points 33
Round 3 World in Motion	Round 8 The World in Black & White
Position 7	Position 27
Points 44	Points 24
Round 4 By the Sun and the Moon	Round 9 Kept in the Dark
Position 0	Position 0
Points 0	Points 0
Round 5 Dawn & Dusk	Round 10 Building Blocks
Position 0	Position 34
Points 0	Points 17

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Andy Westlake tests a charger for all your batteries

At a glance

- Charges AA, AAA and Li-ion batteries
- Low-power 0.5A USB output
- Four plug adaptors supplied
- 12V car adaptor included

IF YOU own several cameras that use different batteries, and are fed up carrying around chargers for each, then a universal unit may be just what you need. The Jupio Compact Universal Charger (LUC0055) claims to be capable of recharging almost any 3.6V or 7.2V Li-ion power pack, using a pair of prongs that slide to align with the battery's contacts. Alternatively, one or two AA or AAA-sized NiCd and NiMH batteries can be charged. It also has a USB socket with 0.5A output, suitable for topping up a phone or other low-power device, which can be used at the same time as charging batteries. Note, though, that this isn't really powerful enough for larger devices such as tablets.

It's not just the output that's universal: the small mains adaptor has interchangeable prongs for the UK, EU, North America and Australia, and automatically switches between input voltages. A 12V in-car connector is also included, allowing you to charge almost any device, anywhere in the world.

Verdict

I tried the charger with an array of camera batteries and while it worked with most, it did fail with some, giving a flashing red status light rather than charging. The problem is that, like other similar products, Jupio offers no compatibility list, so there's no way of knowing for sure before you buy whether or not your own batteries will work. However, if you find that it does work with your devices, this is a really handy charger for travel, especially if you have a camera that normally charges over USB and you want to keep a spare topped up.



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£30, www.braun-phototechnik.de/en
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Hähnel UniPal Plus Universal Charger

£25, www.hahnel.ie
This stylish-looking device uses dials to set its contact prongs to match the battery. A small LCD display can be used to show the battery charge level.



Freeloader CamCaddy 2 Universal Charger

£20, www.poweryouradventures.com
This unit is powered from a USB output via a micro connector, so it's compatible with solar cells and power banks, as well as mains power.



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The Transcend Portable SSD lives up to its name

TOWARDS the end of last year, Transcend announced the new ESD400k Solid State Drive. This is a very small portable hard drive that is available in capacities of 128GB, 256GB, 512GB or 1TB, priced £71.99, £119.99, £221.99 and £459.99 respectively. This means that you pay a hefty premium over conventional portable hard drives for the extra speed and convenience of using a flash memory-based device.

Measuring just 92 x 62mm, the drive is not much bigger than a playing card, and at 10.5mm thick, it slips easily into a pocket. Overall, it's much smaller than other 512GB or 1TB hard drives. In addition, the ESD400k is very light, weighing just 56g thanks to its plastic shell. Being a solid state drive, the ESD400k has no moving parts, so it is less susceptible to damage and will not overheat, either. There's a button on the top that allows the ESD400k to transfer data quickly and easily, using Transcend Elite Data Management software. This allows you to back up files from your computer to the drive, or alternatively sync new files on your drive back to your PC.

Included in the box is a travel pouch to help prevent scratches, as well as a USB 3.0 cable. Transcend claims that with the USB 3.0 connection, write speeds of up to 380MB/s and read speeds of up to 410MB/s are possible. When we tested the 256GB version using Blackmagic Disk Speed Test software in conjunction with a USB 3.0 connection and a SSD inside a MacBook Pro, we managed a respectable 209.9MB/s write speed and 391.2MB/s read speed. Overall, the Transcend ESD400k is a reliable SSD that is small enough to slip into a camera bag and go unnoticed until you need it.

Callum McInerney-Riley



The drive has a USB 3.0 port for speedy transfers

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At a glance

- 24.3-million-pixel, full-frame CMOS sensor
- 1,200-zone metering system
- ISO 50-25,600 (extended)
- 0.5in, 2.4-million-dot EVF
- 117 AF points (phase-detection), 25 AF points (contrast-detection)
- 3in, 1.23-million-dot LCD screen
- £1,499 (body only)

Sony Alpha 7 II

At the time of its release, the Alpha 7 was overshadowed by Sony's flagship compact system camera, the Alpha 7R. **Michael Topham** finds out whether the Alpha 7 II has everything an enthusiast photographer dreams of

For and against

- +** The first full-frame CSC to feature 5-axis in-camera image stabilisation
- +** Inherits the high resolution OLED EVF from the Alpha 7
- +** Redesigned handgrip and control layout enhances operation and handling
- Loud shutter with no dampening or silent shooting mode
- Control wheel at the rear is small and fiddly to use
- Movie-record button could be better positioned

Where in the range



Sony Alpha 7

Price £999 (body only)

The Alpha 7 will continue in the Alpha range, sitting just below the Alpha 7 II. At the time of writing, it costs £500 less than the Alpha 7 II.



Sony Alpha 7R

Price £1,489 (body only)

The difference here is the Alpha 7R's mighty 36.4-million-pixel sensor, which gives it premium status and puts it in the same league as the Nikon D810.

Data file

Sensor	24.3-million-pixel Exmor CMOS sensor
Output size	6000 x 4000 pixels
Focal length mag	1x
Lens mount	E-mount
File format	Raw, raw + JPEG, JPEG
Shutter speeds	30-1/8000sec
ISO	50-25,600 (extended)
Exposure modes	PASM, iAuto, scene selection, sweep panorama
Metering	1,200-zone metering system
Drive	5fps
Movie	Full HD (1920x1080) 60p, 50Mbps
Viewfinder	0.5in, 2.4-million-dot EVF
Display	3in, 1.23-million-dot LCD
Focusing	117 phase-detection AF points
Memory card	SD, SDHC, SDXC
Dimensions	126.9 x 95.7 x 59.7mm
Weight	556g (body only)

When we reviewed the original Sony Alpha 7 (AP 21 June 2014), it left a number of lasting impressions. Not only was it seen as a game-changer in the way it managed to shoehorn a full-frame sensor inside a such a compact body, but also the superb image quality it produced alongside its comprehensive specification made it stand out as an attractive proposition for those seeking a lighter and more compact substitute to a heavy and bulky DSLR.

However, as is often the case, a few underlying issues with the Alpha 7 meant there were areas for improvement. The limited number of full-frame E-mount lenses available at the time was



The Alpha 7 II excels when it's asked to perform well in low-light situations, depicted here in this dark engine-shed scene reminiscent of the last days of steam in the 1960s

the main drawback for those tempted to switch systems, not to mention the Alpha 7's handling quirks and design, which failed to offer the same aesthetic qualities that we've seen from the likes of Fujifilm and Olympus.

Now Sony is looking to improve where the Alpha 7 left off by launching the Alpha 7 II, which sits alongside its predecessor as an upgraded option rather than replacing it in the range.

Features

The headline feature of the Alpha 7 II is its new 5-axis, in-body image-stabilisation system, which shares similarities with the in-camera stabilisation found in the Olympus OM-D E-M5 and E-M1. It is claimed the technology has come from Sony's Handycam

video cameras and is unrelated to Olympus, despite the fact the two companies entered a technology-sharing partnership in 2012.

The benefit of this advanced stabilisation system is its ability not only to compensate for the familiar pitch and yaw movements, whereby the lens rotates upwards and downwards or from side to side, but also to correct for movements of the camera vertically and sideways, with the fifth axis corresponding to the rotational correction around the lens axis – which is crucial when shooting movies or long exposures. This is something that in-lens optical-stabilisation systems simply can't rectify. The outcome of Sony employing this new stabilisation system is to allow the use of shutter speeds 4.5

stops slower than would otherwise be possible, and to open up the possibility of shooting stabilised images no matter what lens is mounted – be it a zoom with optical stabilisation built-in or a prime lens without.

Stabilisation aside, the 24.3-million-pixel CMOS sensor and Bionz X processor are carried across from the Alpha 7, which gives the new camera the same sensitivity range of ISO 100–25,600, expandable to as low as ISO 50 when required. While on paper the hybrid AF system appears to be the same, with 117 phase-detection and 25 contrast-detection focus points, the AF algorithms have been updated to make it reportedly 30% faster and to ensure that it is more reliable when it comes

to tracking moving subjects. It appears the autofocus technology has been adopted from the Alpha 6000, with all the phase-detection areas feeding back distance information to the processor to ensure it's not affected by foreground objects that could come between the camera and the subject, ignoring them instead of trying to refocus.

Other similarities between the Alpha 7 II and its predecessor are its 5fps maximum burst rate and 0.5in, 2.4-million-dot OLED EVF. In addition, there's a 3in, 1.23-million-dot tilt-angle screen at the rear (not the touchscreen type), an anti-dust mechanism that vibrates to dislodge dust particles adhering to the optical filter, and Wi-Fi and NFC connectivity for



The D-Range Optimizer was put to use here to preserve detail in the shadows



hassle-free wireless image transfer to Android or iOS mobile devices using Sony's PlayMemories app.

Videographers have not been forgotten, either. There's now support for the XACV S codec that allows a bit rate of 50Mbps, the addition of S-Log 2 gamma to retain the maximum dynamic range for easier colour grading in post-production, and the option to record a shareable MP4 file at the same time as full-resolution AVCHD or XACV S movies. All these features combine with focus peaking, audio monitoring and vast customisation controls to create a tempting proposition for the enthusiast it is designed to cater for.

Build and handling

The design of the original Alpha 7 wasn't too dissimilar from Sony's NEX-7 compact system camera, albeit with a centrally positioned EVF protruding on top. The durable body was formed of magnesium alloy and, as to be expected, the buttons and dials had seals against dust and moisture – characteristics inherited by the Alpha 7 II.

However, what the Alpha 7 lacked was a handgrip that complemented its excellent fit and finish, preventing its controls from falling naturally to hand. The good news is that Sony has redesigned the grip for the Alpha 7 II, not only transforming the way it feels but also transforming it into an entirely different camera to operate – for the better. The repositioned shutter button, the slimmer and more positive front and rear dials, the two customisable buttons on the top-plate – these all combine to make it more intuitive to use and more DSLR-like to operate.

The on/off switch is perfectly

positioned for use with the index finger, contributing to a brisk start-up time of 2.25secs, which Sony claims is 40% faster than that of the Alpha 7. Those with an observant eye will spot the new matt-black speckled finish, which looks a little smarter to my eye than the clean, smooth, semi-gloss black finish of its forerunner.

My only criticisms regarding the controls are the rather awkward positioning of the movie-record button, which, when pressed with the thumb, has a tendency to jolt the camera slightly, and the rear control wheel being too small and fiddly to use in bitter winter conditions when wearing gloves. If this control wheel were larger and more pronounced, it would enhance the viewing experience in playback mode, as well as the operation of ISO, white balance, creative style and picture style to which it can be assigned.

Those set on the idea of holding two NP-FW50 batteries, bearing in mind that a single battery only holds enough charge for 270 shots with use of the EVF, will require the new VG-C2EM battery grip (expected to cost £299).

Performance

Intrigued to find out how well the new 5-axis image stabilisation system performed, I tested the Alpha 7 II with both the stabilised Carl Zeiss Vario-Tessar T* FE 24-70mm f/4 ZA OSS lens and the non-stabilised Carl Zeiss Sonnar T* FE 55mm f/1.8 ZA prime. When an E-mount lens with optical stabilisation is mounted (such as the 24-70mm), the in-body 5-axis system works in tandem with the OSS system of the lens, with the sensor correcting for rotational and translational movements,

Focal points

The Alpha 7 II offers an abundance of features to wet the appetite of enthusiast photographers

Battery life

The rechargeable NP-FW50 holds enough juice for 270 shots taken using the EVF (with stabilisation on or off), or up to 350 shots using the LCD (stabilisation off). The camera supports USB battery charging.

Customisation

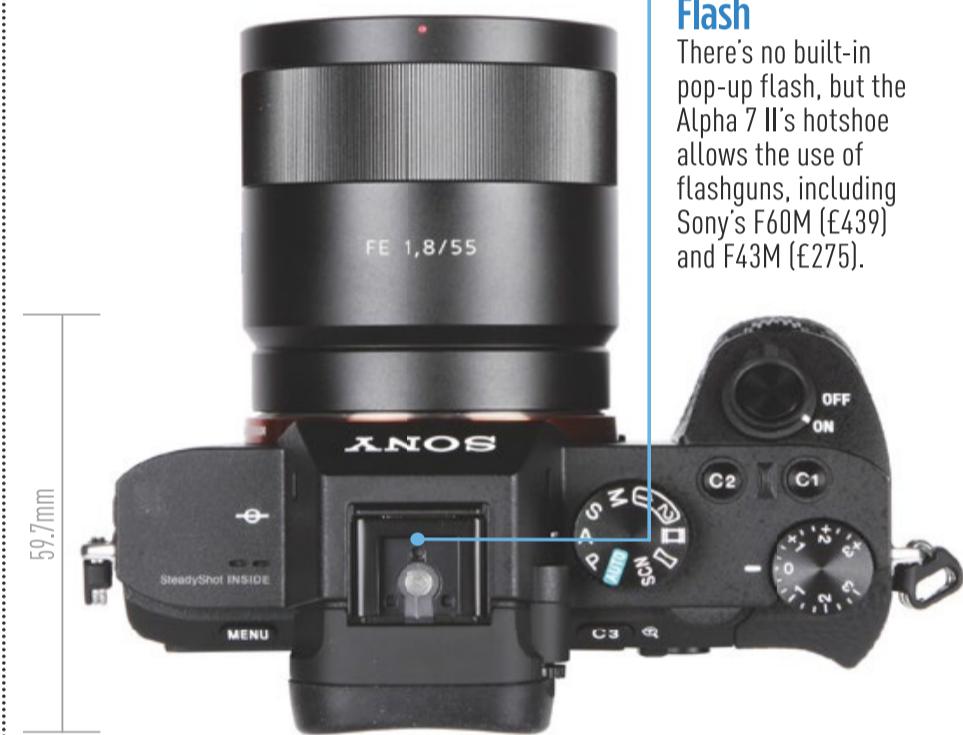
The Alpha 7 II offers superb customisation, allowing you to set up the camera's buttons and wheels as you'd like them. These changes are made via the custom key settings, located via the main menu.

Sweep panorama

Use the front scroll dial to set up the direction of the pan, and then simply pan the camera from left to right, up or down. The Alpha 7 II automatically stitches the panorama and reveals the result on the screen in seconds.

Flash

There's no built-in pop-up flash, but the Alpha 7 II's hotshoe allows the use of flashguns, including Sony's F60M (£439) and F43M (£275).



Audio

Videographers are well catered for with a 3.5mm microphone port at the side. Below this is a 3.5mm port for inserting headphones to monitor audio as it is recorded.

Function button

Situated on the rear panel, the function button offers direct access to focus mode, focus area, creative styles, D-Range Optimizer settings, white balance, metering mode and exposure compensation.





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ND filters aren't just for blurring the elements though, if you use a really long exposure you can make moving objects such as cars and people simply disappear from your images and by using a wide aperture you can also create stunning portraits with soft backgrounds.

ND filters reduce the amount of light entering your camera lens allowing wider apertures & slower shutter speeds and the Hoya PRO ND filters feature ACCU-ND technology, giving a truly neutral colour balance.

The range is ideal for still photography and HDSLR video, and features 9 filters from two stop (PRO ND4) to 10 stop (PRO ND1000) light reduction.

Available in sizes...

49 mm

52 mm

55 mm

58 mm

62 mm

67 mm

72 mm

77 mm

82 mm



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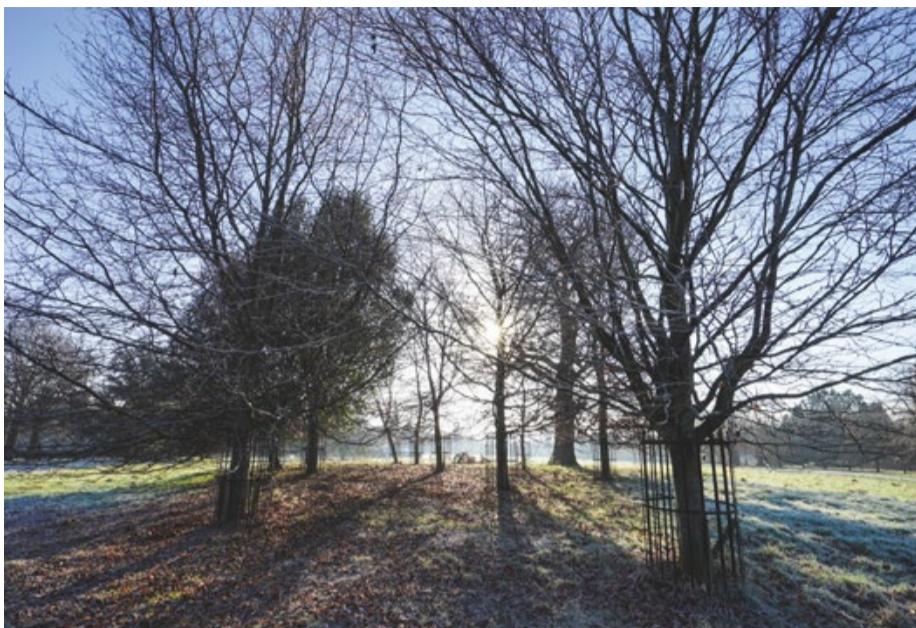
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This shot, taken at 1/15sec, shows the effectiveness of the 5-axis IS system

leaving angular movements to be compensated for by the lens's stabilisation.

In practice, this allowed me to achieve sharp images when shooting handheld as slow as 1/10sec, which would otherwise require the use of a tripod.

Taking the experiment further, I discovered that with a steady hand I shot acceptable results at shutter speeds as slow as 1/4sec. To do this I had to brace the EVF against my eye for extra support, but the effective image-stabilisation system enabled me to shoot sharp handheld shots with the slowest shutter speeds I have ever managed. For convenience, I found myself customising the SteadyShot stabilisation to the C2 button on the top-plate for quick access. Furthermore, the system helps to transform handheld video footage, giving the impression that the camera is attached to a Steadicam stabilising device with its seamless and smooth slow-panning footage.

While the Alpha 7 II might not be built for outright speed, the camera's processor and buffer are capable of keeping up with its continuous speed demands. Loaded with a pro-spec Lexar Professional 2000x 64GB SDXC UHS-II memory card, the Alpha 7 II rattled out 25 raw + JPEG frames at 5fps before slowing, taking 18secs to write the data to the card. Switching the format to raw only, 27 frames could be captured at the same speed, compared to 60 frames when set to Extra Fine JPEG and 210 frames when set to Fine JPEG.

Overall, the general performance of the Alpha 7 II is very good, although it's certainly not a discreet camera. With no dampening or silent shooting

mode, it's less than ideal for times when you like to operate quietly. While I found it hard to fault the improved WhiteMagic screen at the rear, which delivers impressive brightness and excellent detail, I found the colours produced by the EVF to be rather muted and lacking in saturation compared to the scene as viewed by the eye and captured by the sensor. It is a great EVF in the way it provides a fast refresh rate and a high 0.71x magnification, but while I found that increasing the viewfinder brightness helps a little, the accuracy of its colour could be improved to make it more faithful to the scene. On the subject of the EVF, the new softer eyecup gives it a more cushioned and comfortable feel against the eye, which is most noticeable if you wear glasses.

Autofocus

When we reviewed the Alpha 7 we found that it acquired autofocus promptly, which is also true of the Alpha 7 II. It's hard to tell just how effective the updates to the AF algorithms are when you first pick up the camera, as it locks onto stationary subjects with barely any fuss, even when the light levels drop. The refinements to the lock-on AF function appear to have improved things slightly thanks to the updates to the motion-detection algorithms, but it did have difficulty tracking a fast downhill cyclist and cars through the frame at high speed. It's fair to say the camera is at its happiest when it is predicting slower subjects across the frame that aren't moving fast or erratically.

I also found that by setting the button within the control wheel to focus area, it enabled faster positioning of the AF point.

AP

Lab results

Andrew Sydenham's lab tests reveal just how the camera performs

Unlike the Sony Alpha 7R, the Alpha 7 II sticks with a more conventional sensor design that sees the inclusion of an optical low-pass filter to reduce and control the effects of aliasing.

Looking at both raw and JPEG files, the Alpha 7 II performs well when compared with similar files from other 24-million-pixel DSLRs, such as the Nikon D750. To be more precise, ISO 3200 and 6400 are both usable, and despite luminance noise being evident at these settings there is a fine grain-like structure.

Our dynamic range results are up there with some of the best we've ever recorded, being fractionally higher than the Alpha 7R and competing full-frame DSLRs. Users can expect to pull back a good amount of shadow and highlight detail from raw files provided they shoot below ISO 3200. Beyond this point, the figures begin to drop.

Dynamic range



At its lowest native sensitivity setting, our measured dynamic range figures measured 13.4EV at ISO 100, putting it ahead of some of its full-frame rivals, such as the Nikon D750 and Nikon D810, which measured 12.7EV at the same sensitivity in past tests. Results for the Alpha 7 II remained above 12EV right up to ISO 800, but beyond that they dropped slightly, to 11.6EV at ISO 1600 and 9.7EV at ISO 3200. Shadow tones become noisier at ISO 6400, indicating that detail in dark areas of an image will be increasingly lost to noise.

Resolution



A close study of the Alpha 7 II's raw files reveal that the camera delivers 3200l/ph at ISO 100 – an identical level of detail as recorded by the Alpha 7. This figure was recorded with the incredibly sharp Sony Carl Zeiss Sonnar T* FE 55mm f/1.8 ZA prime lens attached. Detail holds up very well indeed through the lower ISO sensitivities too, and it's only upon reaching ISO 800 that it begins to drop to 3000l/ph. Users can expect detail to hold up well at ISO 6400 (2800l/ph), with an outcome of 2400l/ph at ISO 25,600.



Our cameras and lenses are tested using the industry-standard Image Engineering IQ-Analyser software. Visit www.image-engineering.de for more details

Noise

Both raw and JPEG images taken from our diorama scene are captured at the full range of ISO settings. The camera is placed in its default setting for JPEG images. Raw images are sharpened and noise reduction applied to strike the best balance between resolution and noise.

JPEG ISO 100



JPEG ISO 1600



JPEG ISO 12,800



JPEG ISO 400



JPEG ISO 6400



JPEG ISO 25,600



The Alpha 7 II excels when it comes to noise performance. Inspecting our raw files at 100% revealed that it's almost impossible to tell the difference between ISO 100 and ISO 1600, other than that the latter resolves fractionally less detail. Luminance noise only really starts to appear at ISO 3200, yet it's so fine at this setting, and at ISO 6400, that it's of no concern and can be easily addressed by applying noise reduction post-capture. Chroma noise doesn't become a factor until ISO 25,600 is reached, and even then it's by no means severe or unsightly.

Colours between ISO 100 and 12,800 remain vivid, with the saturation only dropping slightly at ISO 25,600. As for JPEGs, the in-camera noise reduction that's applied at high sensitivities is effective up to ISO 3200 without destroying detail, but users should expect a faint warm tinge to JPEGs above ISO 12,800.

The competition



Fujifilm X-T1

Price £899 (body only)

Sensor 16.3 million pixels

ISO 100-51,200 (extended)

More affordable and supported by a wide range of lenses, the X-T1 is a responsive, practical and sophisticated CSC. Although it doesn't use a full-frame sensor, its APS-C, X-Trans chip delivers superb images. It also has a sublime build quality, a rapid AF system and superb EVF.

Nikon D610

Price £1,199 (body only)

Sensor 24.3 million pixels

ISO 50-25,600 (extended)

Nikon's full-frame competitor, the D610, has a similar effective pixel resolution, with a 39-point AF system, 6fps continuous shooting and a 3.2in, 921,000-dot screen. It has an optical viewfinder as opposed to an EVF, features a silent shooting mode and has a dual SD card slot.

Canon EOS 6D

Price £1,269 (body only)

Sensor 20.2 million pixels

ISO 50-102,400 (extended)

The EOS 6D is Canon's most affordable full-frame DSLR. It is Wi-Fi equipped, but has 97% viewfinder coverage as opposed to 100%. It also shoots at a slower rate (4.5fps) and has a less sophisticated AF system with fewer AF points. Its battery stamina is better, though.

Our verdict

POTENTIAL buyers of the Alpha 7 II fall into two camps: those who already own the original Alpha 7, and those who might be tempted to invest in a smaller, lighter system. Based on the trade-in value of a mint-condition Alpha 7 being only around £570 cash, the Alpha 7 II is a very expensive upgrade, setting owners back around £930 compared to the online body-only price of £1,499.

The new features work hard to justify the upgrade – the new handgrip transforms the feel and operation, while the 5-axis image stabilisation could be advantageous if you're conscious of camera shake and more often than not shoot handheld. It is worth pointing out, however, that while sensor stabilisation works with third-party lenses, the caveat is that the focal length of the lens must be entered and only three axes are stabilised.

While Sony has ironed out the main criticisms of the Alpha 7 regarding its aesthetics and

handling, there remain a few areas for improvement – notably the colour accuracy of the EVF, the noisy shutter, the poor battery stamina, and the fact the ±5EV exposure compensation range is only available via the menu and not via the dedicated top-plate dial.

Where it excels is in producing superb-quality images, both in bright light and dim conditions where the ISO must be raised. The images it produces certainly won't disappoint, and what with seven full-frame, E-mount lenses currently available and a flurry of new ones appearing during the course of 2015, you'll no longer be buying into a system in its infancy.

Overall, the Alpha 7 II is a highly recommended full-frame CSC. Improvements have been made where they were needed and the camera offers huge imaging potential in a lightweight body. In a nutshell, the Alpha 7 II is one of the smallest and most powerful full-frame cameras on the market.



Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
GOLD
★★★★★

FEATURES	9/10
BUILD & HANDLING	9/10
METERING	8/10
AUTOFOCUS	8/10
AWB & COLOUR	8/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10
IMAGE QUALITY	9/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	8/10

This shot was taken at a focal length of 150mm – equivalent to 300mm attached to the OM-D E-M1



A day at the races



At a glance

- 16 lens elements in 10 groups
- 0.7m minimum focus distance
- 9 aperture blades
- 72mm filter thread
- Dimensions 79.4 x 160mm
- Weight 760g
- Price £1,299

A sure thing or off the pace? **Michael Topham** lays the odds on the **Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 40-150mm f/2.8 Pro**, which promises a blisteringly fast performance

When Olympus took the wraps off the OM-D E-M1 back in September 2013, the manufacturer also revealed that there would be a pair of top-line, pro-spec lenses arriving to support it. The first of these – the M.Zuiko Digital ED 12-40mm f/2.8 – arrived at the time the OM-D E-M1 was released, but we've had to wait a little more patiently for the M.Zuiko Digital ED 40-150mm f/2.8 Pro to be unveiled.

Following Olympus's promise of a release date in the latter half of 2014, the first production samples of the 40-150mm f/2.8 have finally started to hit UK shores. I was given the opportunity to join Olympus to try out the lens in a sporting environment for which the lens is designed, so I charged the batteries on my OM-D E-M1 and headed to Cheltenham Racecourse.

Specification

The M.Zuiko Digital ED 40-150mm f/2.8 Pro has been designed to meet the expectations of serious micro four thirds users who demand a long zoom and the type of ruggedness you'd expect from a lens with a four-figure price tag. Although it's not the first M.Zuiko Pro-series lens to feature a dust, splash and freeze proof construction (that honour goes to the M.Zuiko Digital ED 12-40mm f/2.8), it's the first telephoto lens in the range that's been made to withstand the severity of professional use. Its main appeal will lie with OM-D E-M1 users who have a fully weather-sealed body, not forgetting Panasonic Lumix DMC-GH4 users who also benefit from a body with many seals to protect against inclement weather or dust reaching, or potentially damaging, the internals. Panasonic GH4 users should take

note, however, that the lens won't be stabilised in any way or form.

Maintaining a maximum aperture of f/2.8 across its zoom range, the lens is constructed from 16 elements in 10 groups, including one aspherical ED, two aspherical, one HD, one SED and three ED lenses. The focusing system relies on a dual linear voice coil motor design (VCM) to deliver quiet and fast performance, and with a minimum focus distance of 70cm and an inner zoom mechanism that allows it to be no longer than 160mm, this is shaping up – on paper, at least – to be one of the most impressive micro four thirds telephoto lenses currently available.

Function button and hood
While buttons on the barrel aren't anything new, this lens has a function button that allows you to control the way you set up the



Opening the aperture fully to f/2.8 created pleasing background blur to this mono shot

'The size of the focus ring is fairly modest compared to the large zoom ring, but this didn't prove to be a cause for concern'

camera's function buttons. In addition, the sizeable lens hood is the manufacturer's second hood with a retractable design. It's ingenious in the way it works: twist the hood's release ring anticlockwise from behind the camera and it effortlessly pulls in towards the camera body, protecting both the push-pull AF/MF control ring and the zoom ring when not in use. It also saves you from having to remove the lens hood and invert it for storage or transportation purposes. The only downfall of this unique lens hood design is that when it's retracted and pulled back, it obscures the zoom ring making it difficult to use. When the hood isn't required, it's best to remove it altogether.

Build

The all-metal construction of this 40-150mm lens oozes strength and rigidity, as you'd expect. Just like the M.Zuiko Digital ED 12-40mm f/2.8, it complements the build quality of the OM-D E-M1 and manages to feel at one with the camera. Professional lenses are always expected to be able to survive a bit of a battering from their users, and there's nothing to suggest that this 40-150mm lens will get damaged easily. Even a collision with a solid spectator barrier, albeit a glancing blow, failed to damage the lens in any way during my time with it.

Storm clouds and drizzle early in the day looked like the perfect

conditions for putting the lens's weather sealing to the test, but the sun broke through in true British fashion. Back in the office, I saturated the lens (while coupled to the OM-D E-M1) using a watering can for several minutes, and it passed this test with flying colours. Users looking for a filter to protect the front element from accidental knocks and scrapes will also be interested in the PRF-ZD72 Pro – a filter specially designed for the lens that incorporated ZERO (Zuiko Extra-low Reflection Optical) coatings to minimise ghosting and flare, although unfortunately, it was not available to me during testing.

Autofocus

It's the speed of the autofocus, as well as the image quality, of course, that Olympus users will be most eager to read about. In use, and in both single and continuous AF, the 40-150mm f/2.8 showed barely any sign of hesitation locking onto fast-moving subjects – even when tracking racehorses galloping on their approach to the finish line. The autofocus is very fast indeed, which is great news for sports and wildlife photographers who require the split-second lock-on speeds that spell the difference between successfully bagging a sharp shot or not.

In use

The 40-150mm f/2.8 is particularly pleasing to operate. Everything from its smooth zoom



The lens is highly versatile and is as good at capturing candids as it is action

ring to its push-pull AF/MF ring works well. The zoom-ring motion is as smooth at its widest focal length as it is at full telephoto and offers a lovely fluidity that I found just a fraction stiffer than the AF/MF focus ring. Focus-distance markings are revealed as the AF/MF focus ring is snapped back towards the body, while the tripod collar rotates freely once loosened. It doesn't notch into place as it rotates like some lenses, although the white dots and white line on the collar itself are aligned easily enough. The size of the focus ring is fairly modest compared to the large zoom ring, but this didn't prove to be a cause for concern in use.

Best ever?

While the price of the lens (£1,299, or £1,499 with a 1.4x converter thrown in) may see it creep only into the most serious user's kit bags, the M.Zuiko Digital ED 40-150mm f/2.8 Pro is

certainly an optic to get micro four thirds users excited. The three hours I spent with it convinced me that it is one of the best and most enjoyable micro four thirds lenses I have ever used.

When I first picked it up, I couldn't believe how small this lens is for a telephoto that covers such an impressive range, and with such a large maximum aperture. This translates to a huge weight saving over other telephoto zooms and works out at close to half the weight of Canon's 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM lens. It's a more manageable lens to transport too, which was especially noticeable when I was holding the camera and lens up to my eye for long durations, or when it was slung over my shoulder. Add to this its ability to resolve the finer details in the frame and I'm left with a lasting impression that the Olympus M.Zuiko Digital ED 40-150mm f/2.8 Pro is an absolute stunner.

At the heart of the image



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Technical Support

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Image stabilisation

Q I have been reading about so-called '5-axis' image stabilisation systems, and as an avid macro shooter I'm interested in how they're supposed to give extra help for close-ups. But one thing puzzles me: if these extra dimensions are needed, how come Canon, Nikon and Sigma all make optically stabilised macro lenses? Do they have 5-axis stabilisation too?

Marco Vicino

A That's a very perceptive question, and the answer is that while these lenses – the Canon 100mm f/2.8 IS, Nikon 105mm f/2.8 VR and Sigma 105mm f/2.8 OS – all have built-in stabilisation, only the Canon specifically claims to be able to correct for the horizontal and vertical movements of the camera that are important when shooting close-ups (Canon calls this system 'Hybrid IS'). Both the Nikon and Sigma lenses have conventional OS

Using Contax lenses

Q I read with great interest your first look of the Sony Alpha 7 II (AP 13 December 2014), as I'm thinking of taking the plunge into digital and I'm hoping to be able to continue using the excellent lenses from my old Contax film SLR. Would this be possible, and if so, what sort of limitations might I expect?

Malcolm Bradbury

A Adapters are available to use Contax/Yashica-mount SLR lenses on the various Sony Alpha 7 models. One good source for buying them is SpeedGraphic, which sells extremely high-quality Novoflex adapters. You would need the Novoflex Sony NEX Adapter for Contax/Yashica mount, code NVNEXCONT, which costs £99. Visit www.speedgraphic.co.uk/body_adaptors/novoflex_sony_nex_adaptor/20879_p.html, then select 'Contax/Yashica' in the 'Fitting' drop-down menu.

This is the high-quality end of spectrum, and it's possible to find cheaper alternatives online. For example, Amazon has a Fotodiox-branded adapter for £25, and I've had good experience with Kipon adapters, which can be bought on eBay for about £45. Paying extra gets higher-quality construction, smoother operation when mounting and removing lenses, and should guarantee that the lens is held



Contax lenses can be used on the Alpha 7 II via an adapter

properly straight and will focus to infinity.

Focusing and aperture operation are both fully manual, but the camera has a good range of focus aids to help with this. You should get the benefit of the camera's in-body image-stabilisation system with all your lenses, but you'll have to manually enter the focal length into the camera each time you change lenses.

To see a full test of the Alpha 7 II, see pages 44–49 of this issue. **Andy Westlake**

systems, which are still perfectly good at longer shooting distances, but become increasingly less effective as the subject gets closer.

It's worth noting that no optical stabilisation system can possibly correct for the fifth 'axis', as that is rotation around the lens's optical axis. Only in-body systems can do this – Olympus, Pentax and Sony all use mechanisms that can physically rotate the sensor, while some other '5-axis' systems employ electronic correction for this rotation during movie shooting.

Andy Westlake

Batteries in transit

Q I will be emigrating to New Zealand in April and my general household goods

will be sent by sea in a container and should be delivered in about 12 weeks. I thought that to help keep my personal baggage within the airline limits I would pack my Nikon D300 with my collection of old film cameras to go by sea. However, can I leave the battery in the camera or should I take it out? In either case, should the battery be fully charged or discharged? The D300 has the original battery, which was supplied with the camera seven years ago. Electrical systems are a mystery to me, so I would appreciate your advice.

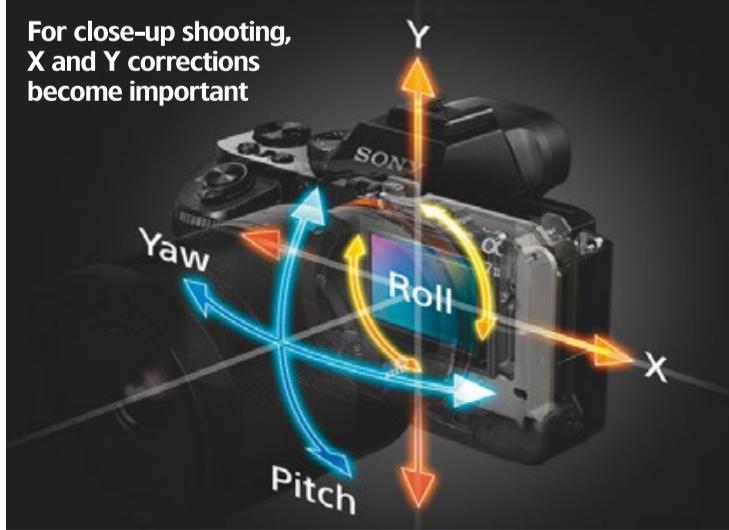
John Duckett

A I think this is really a theoretical rather than a practical problem. I have kept batteries stored in cameras for years, and never once has one burst into flames, so you should be absolutely fine no matter what you do.

Having said that, to minimise any possible risk of problems you might prefer to discharge the battery, remove it from the camera and possibly cover the contacts with tape to be absolutely sure. However, this would be more about peace of mind than anything else.

Andy Westlake

For close-up shooting, X and Y corrections become important



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Mike's 360° camera shoots all-round panoramas

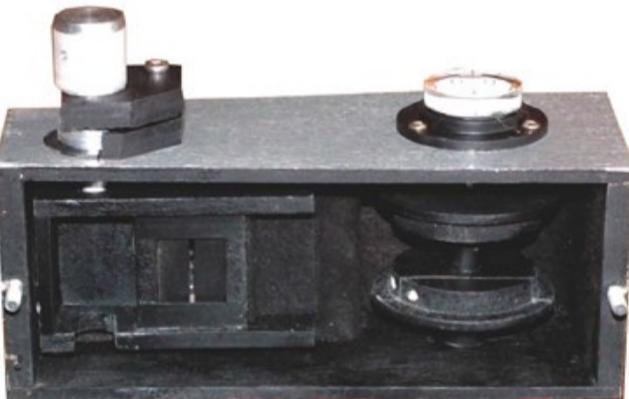
MY HOME-MADE CAMERA

360° rotational camera

Retired engineer Mike Rignall explains how he built his home-made 360° camera

CHOOSING the lens for this camera was not too difficult, since I decided that as well as 360° horizontal coverage, I also wanted a decent vertical coverage to avoid an exaggerated 'letterbox' effect – the perfect compromise was a 28mm lens. All 35mm SLR lenses are designed to cover a 43mm circle and in this camera the exposure is made through a 1mm slit covering the 24mm height of the film. This means you do not need an expensive lens with 100lpmm at the corners; a lower-cost optic will do the job.

The next problem was how to



pull the film past the exposure slot. The length for a 360° scan is simply $2 \times \pi \times$ focal length (in this case 176mm) and may be obtained by winding the film onto a take-up spool of 56mm diameter. It's as simple as that.

Now the odd part. This spool is



Made by

Mike Rignall is an 81-year-old retired engineer. He spent his working life in electronics, but has always had a passion for cameras and optics. On retirement, he set up a fully equipped workshop to indulge himself in his love of camera design and fabrication.

The components

- About 1/4m² of 6mm MDF
- Bubble level
- 6rpm motor/gearbox
- 28mm ex-SLR lens

How I made it

The first problem I had to overcome was to look at the mathematics of keeping an image stationary on a piece of moving film, then find a method of smoothly moving the film, and finally deciding how wide the slot through which the exposure is made should be. At this point I was pleased to have had engineering training and could use a spreadsheet to analyse the performance. After several hours of number crunching, the results are, in simple words, painfully obvious!



BLAST FROM THE PAST

Retina IIIC

Ivor Matanle looks at the last of the classic Retina folding cameras

LAUNCHED 1957

PRICE AT LAUNCH £69 15s in 1960 (£69.75)

GUIDE PRICE TODAY £150-£250

THE MUCH-LOVED Retina range of folding cameras, made in the former Nagel factory in Stuttgart, Germany, was first announced in 1934 and continued through many models and variants until 1960. The Retina IIIC (big 'C') differed from the previous Retina IIIC (small 'c') in several ways, but principally in having larger, equally sized rangefinder and viewfinder windows, and having brightline viewfinder frames for 35mm, 50mm and 85mm lenses in the viewfinder, so no accessory viewfinders were necessary. The lens was a front-element-interchangeable 50mm f/2 Schneider Xenon (or, in some cases, Rodenstock Heligon) of very high performance, and the shutter a ten-speed Synchro Compur. Focusing was by coupled rangefinder.

What's good Great reliability, excellent build quality, superb image quality.

What's bad The 35mm and 85mm Retina-Xenon lenses cannot be used on cameras with 50mm f/2 Heligon lenses, and vice versa.



Mike's image of Westonbirt Arboretum in Gloucestershire, taken with the 360° rotational camera

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Professor Newman on...

Speed boosters: the impossible dream?

Professor Bob Newman explains how it is possible for a lens to increase its 'speed'

With the advent of mirrorless interchangeable-lens cameras, there has been the development of a new accessory, the 'speed booster', which apparently increases the 'speed' of a lens to which it is fitted. To understand how the speed of a lens can be 'boosted', we need to look at how these devices work.

First, we should note that 'speed booster' is a rather misleading name; a more descriptive term would be 'wide converter', which would make it clear that these devices are acting in a similar way to a teleconverter, which they are.

A teleconverter increases the focal length of a lens by placing a negative lens combination behind that lens (see image, below left). The power (the reciprocal of the focal length) of a combination of lenses is approximately equal to the sum of their powers, so if a negative lens is included in the group, it reduces the overall power, thus lengthening the focal length. This in turn requires the lens to be further away from the image plane to focus properly, so a

teleconverter also acts as a short extension tube, in order to maintain focus.

The f-number of a lens is the focal length divided by the aperture diameter. Since the teleconverter is placed at the back of the lens, behind the aperture, it has no effect on its diameter, but since the focal length has increased, the f-number must also increase, and the combined lens is slower (in proportion to the focal-length multiplier) than the original lens.

A wide converter has the opposite action. It places a positive lens behind the original lens (see image, below right), thus increasing its power and shortening its focal length. Unfortunately, the shorter focal length means that the combined lens will achieve focus short of the original image plain, so in normal circumstances, a wide converted lens could never achieve infinity

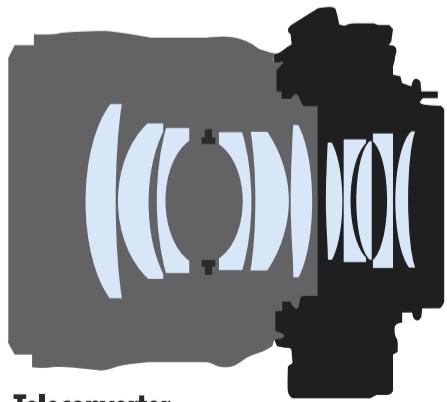


Speed booster converters make lenses appear wider and brighter

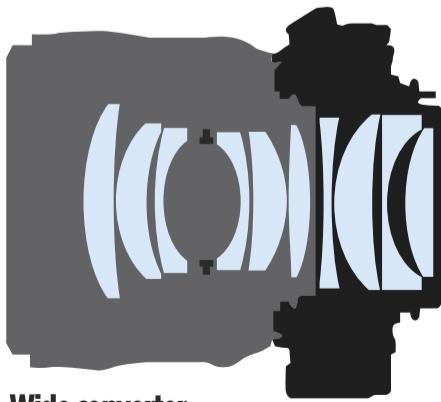
focus. However, mirrorless cameras generally have a lens register (distance between the lens flange and focal plane) that is somewhat shorter than that of an SLR, which requires room for the reflex viewfinder. Often the difference is as much as 20mm. In effect, using a DSLR lens with a mirrorless camera, there is available up to 20mm of a 'negative extension tube', which is what allows the wide converter to operate.

If we now consider the f-number of the converted lens, the aperture diameter is unchanged as before, but the focal length is shorter, so overall the f-number has got smaller – that is, the lens has become 'faster'. In reality, the lens is still transmitting the same amount of light, but it has just been packed into a smaller area by the extra power of the lens – which is why the 'speed booster' only works well if the sensor of the camera it is used with is smaller than that of the camera for which the lens was designed.

'The development of a new accessory, the "speed booster", apparently increases the speed of a lens to which it is fitted'



Teleconverter



Wide converter

Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer

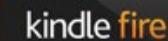
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	80-400mm F4.5-5.6 ATX Tokina	E++ £239	60mm F2.8 AE Macro	E+ / Mint- £399	Bay 60 Hood 100-250	E+ / E++ £25 - £35	210mm F4 C	As Seen / E+ £49 - £139	24-70mm F2.8 AFS ED	E+ £879 - £899
	80mm F5.6 L IS USM	Mint- £299	60mm F2.8 MM Macro C	E+ £239	Bay 60 Softar II	E+ £20	210mm F4 N	E+ / E++ £69 - £99	24-85mm F2.8-4 AFD	E+ / E++ £269 - £289
	85mm F1.2 L USM	E+ £299	65mm F2.8 Hood	E+ £179	Bellows + Hood	E+ £179	Auto Extension Tube 1	E+ / Mint- £15 - £25	24-85mm F3.5-4.5 G ED VR	E+ / E++ £279
	85mm F1.2 L USM MKII	E+ / Mint- £1,099 - £1,279	70-210mm F3.5-4.5 Apo Sigma	E+ £49	Close-up Calculator	E+ £25	Auto Extension Tube 2	E+ / E++ £15 - £25	24mm F1.4 A G AFS ED	E+ £189
	40mm F4 E	As Seen / E+ £79 - £129	70-210mm F3.8-4	E+ £29	CW Winder + Remote	E+ £199	Auto Extension Tube 3S	E+ £19	24mm F1.4 G AFS ED + Filter	Mint- £1,189
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	70-140mm F4.5 PE	E+ £599	70-300mm F4-6.7 Cosina	E+ £119	Extension Tube 32	Mint- £35	Power Drive 645	E+ £45	24mm F3.5 ED PC-E	E+ £1,039
	105mm F4.5 PE Macro	E+ £199	100-400mm F4-5.6 L IS USM E+ / Mint- £749 - £889	E+ / Unused £449 - £799	Extension Tube 55	E+ £30 - £35	Power Drive N	E+ £45	28-100mm F3.5-5.6 AFG	As Seen / E+ £29 - £59
	150mm F3.5 E	As Seen / E+ £49 - £109	100mm F2.8 USM Macro	E+ £279	80-200mm F4 MM	E+ / E++ £169 - £179	Extension Tube 56E	E+ £59	28-200mm F3.5-5.6 AFD	E+ / E++ £99 - £129
	150mm F3.5 PE	As Seen £59	135mm F2 L USM	E+ / Mint- £589 - £599	80-200mm F4.5 Tokina	E+ £25	Variable Extension Tube	E+ / E++ £199	AE Prism Finder (FK402)	Exc £49
	200mm F4.5 E	E+ / Unused £119 - £219	180mm F3.5 L Macro USM	E+ / Mint- £699 - £749	100mm F3.5 AE	E+ £239	Lens Mounting Ring Bay 60 (40681)	Mint- £25	Plain Prism	E+ £39
	200mm F5.6 E	E+ £129	200-500mm F5-6.3 D L AF Tamron	E+ £499	100mm F3.5 MM	E+ / E++ £219	Pistol Grip	E+ £15	28-300mm F3.5-6.3 XR Di Tamron	E+ £199
	250mm F5.6 E	As Seen / E+ £79 - £159	300mm F2.8 L IS USM	E+ £3,099	100mm F4 Medical Set Yashica	Unused £299	Pro Motordrive 500 NPC	E+ £149	Prism Angle Finder	E+ £35
	500mm F8 E	E+ £399	400mm F2.8 L IS USM	E+ £349	135mm F2 (60 Year Edition)	Unused £2,399	Winder F	E+ £20	Prism Finder FP401	E+ £49
	2x Converter E	E+ £59	400mm F2.8 L USM	E+ £249	135mm F2.8 HMC Hoya	Unused £29	Wind Knob	E+ £13	Prism Finder N	E+ £49
	Speed Grip E	Exc / E+ £15 - £25	400mm f4 DO IS USM	E+ £3,850	135mm F2.8 MM	E+ £199	D Flash 40	E+ £149	Mamiya 7/II	
	120 E Mag	E+ £45	400mm F5.6 L USM	E+ / E++ £829 - £849	180mm F2.8 AE	Unused £599	Proflash 4504	E+ £159	43mm F4.5 L + Finder	E+ £799 - £849
	Polaroid Mag E	E+ / E++ £25 - £59	600mm F4 L IS USM	E+ £5,499	180mm F2.8 MM	E+ £349	Flash L Grip	E+ £20	50mm F4.5 L + Finder	E+ £689 - £799
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200mm F4.5 S	E+ £99 - £129
500mm F8 S	E+ £299
2x Teleconverter PS	E+ £89 - £99
2x MC7 Converter Teleplus	E+ £39
2x Teleconverter S	E+ £69
2x Converter DG Pro300 Kenko	E+ £79
AE Prism Finder S	E+ £89
ME Prism Finder S	E+ £79
Prism Finder SQI	E+ £59
Polaroid Mag S	E+ £25

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800mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
1000mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
12-24mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
24-70mm F2.8 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
28-100mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
300mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
500mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
550mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
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300mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
500mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
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600mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
700mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
800mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
1000mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
12-24mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
24-70mm F2.8 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
28-100mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
300mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
500mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
550mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
600mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
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1000mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
12-24mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
24-70mm F2.8 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
28-100mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
300mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
500mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
550mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
600mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
700mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
800mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
1000mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
12-24mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
24-70mm F2.8 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
28-100mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
300mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
500mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
550mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
600mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
700mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
800mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
1000mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
12-24mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
24-70mm F2.8 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
28-100mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
300mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
500mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
550mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
600mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
700mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
800mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
1000mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
12-24mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
24-70mm F2.8 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
28-100mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
300mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
500mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
550mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
600mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
700mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
800mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
1000mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
12-24mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
24-70mm F2.8 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
28-100mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
300mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
500mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
550mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
600mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
700mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
800mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
1000mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
12-24mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
24-70mm F2.8 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
28-100mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
300mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
500mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £299
550mm F4.5-5.6 EX DG Macro	E+ £



See up to 3 images of each used item on website
 Website updates used equipment list 10-15 times daily
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FM2T Titanium Body Only.....	E++ £499	MZ50 + Tamron 28-80mm.....	E++ £29	Magic.....	E+ / E++ £199
FM2 Chrome + MD12 Motordrive.....	E++ £199	Z1-P Body Only.....	E+ / E++ £69 - £79	Magic II.....	E+ £199
FM Black Body Only.....	E+ £89	Z50P Body Only.....	E+ £39	Model I.....	As Seen £79
FA Black + MD15 Motordrive.....	Exc £79	SFXN Body Only.....	E+ £29	Original.....	As Seen £79
FA Chrome Body Only.....	E+ £79	SF7 Body Only.....	E+ £39	Rolleicord II.....	As Seen £109
FE Chrome Body Only.....	E+ £79	12-24mm F4 DA ED AL (IF).....	Mint- £489	Art Deco.....	As Seen £99
FG Black Body + MDE Drive.....	E+ £79	14mm F2.8 SMC DA.....	E+ £169	Black Baby 4x4.....	E+ £299
FG Black Body Only.....	E+ £79	16-45mm F4 DA ED AL.....	E+ £169		
FG Chrome + MDE Drive.....	E+ £79	17-50mm F2.8 DI II Tamron.....	E+ £179		
FG Chrome Body Only.....	E+ / E++ £65 - £79	17-70mm F4 DA (IF) SDM.....	E+ £289		
FG20 Chrome Body + MDE Drive.....	E+ £69	18-55mm F3.5-5.6 AL WR.....	E+ £59		
FG20 Chrome Body Only.....	E+ £59 - £69	19-35mm F3.5-4.5 Cosina.....	E+ £59		
20mm F2.8 AIS.....	E+ / E++ £289 - £349	21mm F3.2 DA LE.....	E+ / Mint- £319 - £349	G1375M Off Centre Ball Head.....	E+ £75
21mm f4 + Finder.....	E+ £349	24mm F1.4 ED AS UMC Samyang.....	Mint- £379	G1377M Centre Ball.....	E+ £59
25-50mm F4 AIS.....	E+ £179	24mm F1.4 ED AS UMC Samyang.....	Mint- £379	G1435B Extra Low Column Series1.....	E+ £20
35-70mm F3.3-4.5 AIS.....	E+ £59	24mm F2 SMC FA IF AL.....	E+ £499	G1576M Off Centre Ball Head.....	Exc £99
35mm F2 AIS.....	E+ £249	28-70mm F4 FA AL.....	E+ £49 - £69	GC3320 Tripod Holster + Strap.....	E+ £25
35mm F2.8 PC Shift.....	E+ £199 - £219	28-80mm F3.5-5.6 FA.....	E+ / Mint- £25 - £49	G52511KB Short Carbon Centre Column.....	Mint- £59
43-86mm F3.5 AI.....	E+ £69 - £79	35mm F2.4 DA AL.....	E+ £99	Off Centre Ball Head.....	E+ £59
43-86mm F3.5 Non AI.....	E+ £69	35mm F2.8 DA Limited Edition.....	Mint- £269	Pan & Tilt Head.....	Exc £39
45mm F2.8 GN Auto.....	E+ £149	50-135mm F2.8 DA* ED SDM.....	E+ £549	Rationnelle No 4 P/Tilt Head.....	E+ £49
45mm F2.8 P.....	E+ / E++ £179	50-200mm F4.5-6.6 DA ED.....	As Seen / E++ £35 - £39	Studek 320 Extending Centre Column.....	E+ £25
50-300mm F4.5 AI.....	E+ £399	50mm F1.4 SMC FA.....	E+ / E++ £169 - £219		
50mm F1.2 AIS.....	E+ / E++ £449 - £499	50mm F2.8 SMC D FA Macro.....	E+ £249		
55mm F2.8 AIS Micro.....	Exc / E++ £99 - £169	55-300mm F4.5-5.6 DA-L ED.....	Mint- £129		
55mm F3.5 AI Micro.....	As Seen / E+ £49	70-300mm F4.5-5.6 Di Tamron.....	E+ £69		
80-200mm F4 AIS.....	E+ / Mint- £99 - £219	70mm F2.4 DA Limited Edition.....	Mint- £269		
80-200mm F4.5 AI.....	Exc / E+ £49 - £69	75-300mm F4.5-5.8 FA J AL.....	As Seen £49		
105mm F1.8 AIS.....	E+ £299	80-200mm F4.7-5.6 FA.....	Exc £39		
105mm F2.8 AIS Micro.....	E+ £349	100-300mm F4.5-5.6 F.....	E+ £79		
135mm F2.8 AI'd.....	E+ £69	100mm F2.8 D FA Macro.....	E+ £299		
135mm F3.5 Non AI.....	As Seen £55	AF200FG Flash.....	Mint- £49		
16mm F2.8 AIS Fisheye.....	E+ £289	AF400FTZ Flash.....	E+ / E++ £49 - £89		
180mm F2.8 ED AIS.....	E+ £299	AF500FTZ Flash.....	E+ / E++ £69 - £79		
200mm F2 IFED AIS.....	E+ £99 - £1,499	Speedlite YN460I + Flash Trigger Set.....	As Seen £29		
200mm F4 AI Micro.....	E+ £189				
200mm F4 AIS.....	E+ £149				
200mm F5.6 Medical.....	E+ £399				

Olympus OM

OM2SP Black Body Only.....	E+ / E++ £99 - £159	OM2N Chrome Body + Winder 2.....	Exc £79	OM2N Chrome Body Only.....	E+ £79
OM2N Chrome Body Only.....	E+ £79	OM2N Chrome Body Only.....	Exc £79	OM10 Body + Winder 2 + T20 Flash.....	Exc £39
OM30 Chrome Body Only.....	E+ £39	PLC-XU10E Digital Projector.....	Mint- £199	Sony SVGA VPL-ES2 Projector.....	Mint- £299
OM10 Body + Winder 2 + T20 Flash.....	Exc £39	VPL-EX1 Digital Projector.....	Mint- £299		
PM6 Black Body Only.....	Mint- £199				
35mm F2.8 Zuike Shift.....	E+ / E++ £229 - £249				
35-70mm F4 Zuike.....	As Seen / Unused £29 - £89				
50-250mm F5 Zuike.....	E+ £299 - £349				

WANTED

OLYMPUS OM & Micro 4/3rd Lenses

65-200mm F4 Zuike.....	E+ £149	80mm F4 Macro Zuike.....	E+ £175	180mm F2.8 Zuike.....	E+ £249 - £289
Power Bounce Grip 2.....	E+ £39	Power Bounce Grip 2.....	E+ £39	710 Ringflash.....	E+ £75
T10 Ringflash.....	E+ £75	720 Flash.....	E+ / E++ £9 - £25	728 Flash Head.....	As Seen £49
T28 Flash Head.....	As Seen £49	Fantax 250AF + 70-120mm.....	E+ £79	T32 Flash.....	E+ / E++ £15 - £29
T45 Hammerhead Flash.....	E+ £175	Fantax 600M + 150mm.....	E+ / E++ £299 - £349		

Pentax 645 Series

645N Body Only.....	E+ £349	45-85mm F4.5 A.....	E+ £289	45mm F2.8 A.....	E+ / E++ £159 - £199
45-85mm F4.5 A.....	E+ £289	80-160mm F4.5 A.....	E+ £289 - £299	120mm F4 Macro FA.....	E+ / E++ £79
45mm F2.8 A.....	E+ / E++ £159 - £199	120mm F4 Macro FA.....	E+ / E++ £159 - £199	150mm F3.5 A.....	E+ / E++ £159 - £199
200mm F4 A.....	E+ £179	200mm F4 A.....	E+ £179	200mm F4 A.....	E+ £179
Polaroid Back II.....	E+ £75	200mm F4 A.....	E+ £179	200mm F4 A.....	E+ £179

Pentax 67

67II Body Only.....	E+ £599	67x Mirror Up Body Only.....	E+ £299	67x Mirror Up Body Only.....	E+ £299
67x Mirror Up Body Only.....	E+ £299	67x Mirror Up Body Only.....	E+ £299	67x Mirror Up Body Only.....	E+ £299
35mm F4.5 Fish-eye Takumar.....	As Seen / Mint- £149 - £499	150mm F4 EL.....	E+ £149 - £149	150mm F4 EL.....	E+ £149 - £149
45mm F4 SMC.....	E+ / E++ £219 - £279	150mm F4 HFT.....	E+ / E++ £129 - £149	150mm F4 HFT.....	E+ / E++ £129 - £149
500mm F5.6.....	E+ £449 - £899	150mm F4 PQ.....	E+ / E++ £399 - £449	150mm F4 PQ.....	E+ / E++ £399 - £449
55mm F4.....	As Seen £149	180mm F2.8 PO.....	E+ £1,099	180mm F2.8 PO.....	E+ £1,099
100mm F4 Macro + 1:1 Converter.....	E+ £399	1.4x Longer PO Converter.....	E+ £349	1.4x Longer PO Converter.....	E+ £349
135mm F4 Macro Takumar.....	Exc £129 - £149	2x HFT Converter.....	E+ £59 - £75	2x HFT Converter.....	E+ £59 - £75
150mm F2.8 Takumar.....	Exc £99	45 Degree Prism.....	E+ / E++ £149 - £299	45 Degree Prism.....	E+ / E++ £149 - £299
165mm F2.8.....	E+ £129	Polaroid Mag 6008.....	E+ / Mint- £35 - £139	Polaroid Mag 6008.....	E+ / Mint- £35 - £139
200mm F4 SMC.....	E+ £199				
200mm F4 Takumar.....	As Seen / E+ £79 - £199				
300mm F4.....	E+ £199				
300mm F4 ED (IF) M*.....	E+ £999				
67 Reverse Adapter.....	E+ £39				
67x Autobellows.....	E+ / E++ £249 - £349				
77 Bayonet Skylight 1A.....	E+ £25				
BG-60 Grid Screen (67II).....	E+ £30				
Heliocord Extension Tube.....	E+ £79				
Lens Hood Takumar 135/4, 150/4.....	E+ £25				
67 Auto Bellows.....	Mint- £299				

WANTED

Pentax 67/67II , 645 , 35mm

Pentax AF.....	
MZ7 + 28-80mm.....	Unused £99
MZ5 Body Only.....	E+ £39



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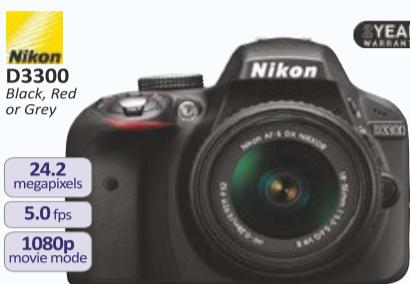
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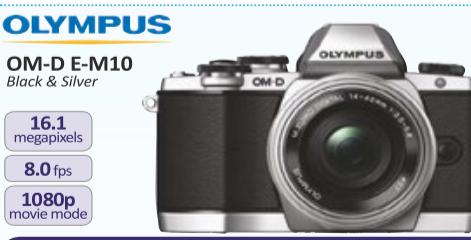
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OM-D E-M10 Body £489
OM-D E-M10 +14-42mm Electronic Zoom £549

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OM-D E-M1 + 12-50mm £1249
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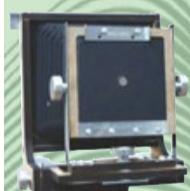
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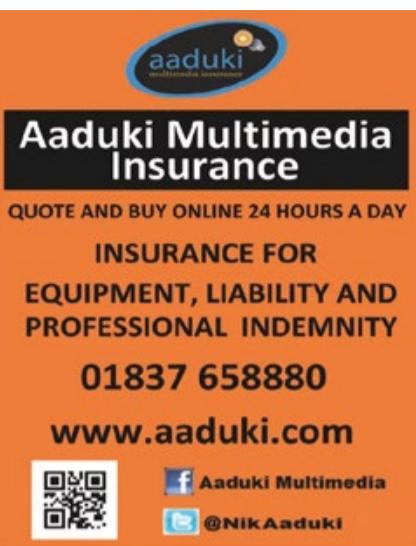
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Final Analysis

Roger Hicks considers...

Water Taxi (c2010), by Gary Barat



© GARYBARATVISIONS.COM

In 1997, Gary Barat and his wife Chandri founded the Barat Foundation to help disadvantaged children through art. They define 'art' widely, including writing, cookery, painting, sculpture and photography. And fun: an art in itself. Visit baratfoundation.org to see the sort of things they do.

So far, so worthy. But I knew none of this when I first saw Gary's photography at (yes, once again) Arles in France. It made me smile, and sometimes even laugh out loud. This is one of my favourites. The intriguing story is how it was made.

The Barats live and work in Newark, New Jersey – a city that is quite touchy about its proximity to New York. One of the many things that the two cities have in common, however, is dense, slow-moving (read: frequently stationary) traffic. Instead of drumming his fingers on the wheel, cursing under his breath or just

listening to the radio, Gary takes pictures out of the car window. The taxi is a real taxi, but the swimmer is part of an advertisement painted on the side of a bus. It's that simple.

Surreal street photography

It shows, very clearly, how surrealism is where you find it. By definition, surrealism cannot be defined. In a picture like this, you literally cannot figure out what is going on: there is a dream-logic to it and you (sort of) accept it, while still asking yourself basic questions such as 'Why?' or indeed 'How?' Other pictures, shot in the same way out of the car window, range from similar dream states to a humorous kind of conventional street photography – though often with in-your-face colours that verge on the garish, which in itself is a bit dream-like.

Fortune, they say, favours the prepared

mind, and this is one of the most fascinating things about this series. Yes, of course there is a 'prepared mind', but there is also to some degree what Buddhists call 'no mind', an absolute openness that refuses to be bounded by the frustration and, indeed, anger of driving in heavy traffic. Is the relationship between 'prepared mind' and 'no mind' one of conflict or co-operation?

Or perhaps the two are the same thing, and constitute one aspect of what we call 'artistic talent'. Perhaps 'artistic talent' is inseparable from life itself: without humour and art and love and enjoyment, would life really be worth living? Gary would be the first to admit that he is an ageing hippy, with a lot of ideals and a determination to share as much laughter and happiness as possible – and he does this as enthusiastically in his own art as through his foundation.

AP

Roger Hicks has been writing about photography since 1981 and has published more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz (visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.com). Every week in this column Roger deconstructs a classic or contemporary photograph. **Next week he considers an image by AM Burrough**

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